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Mississippi River Improvement Convention.

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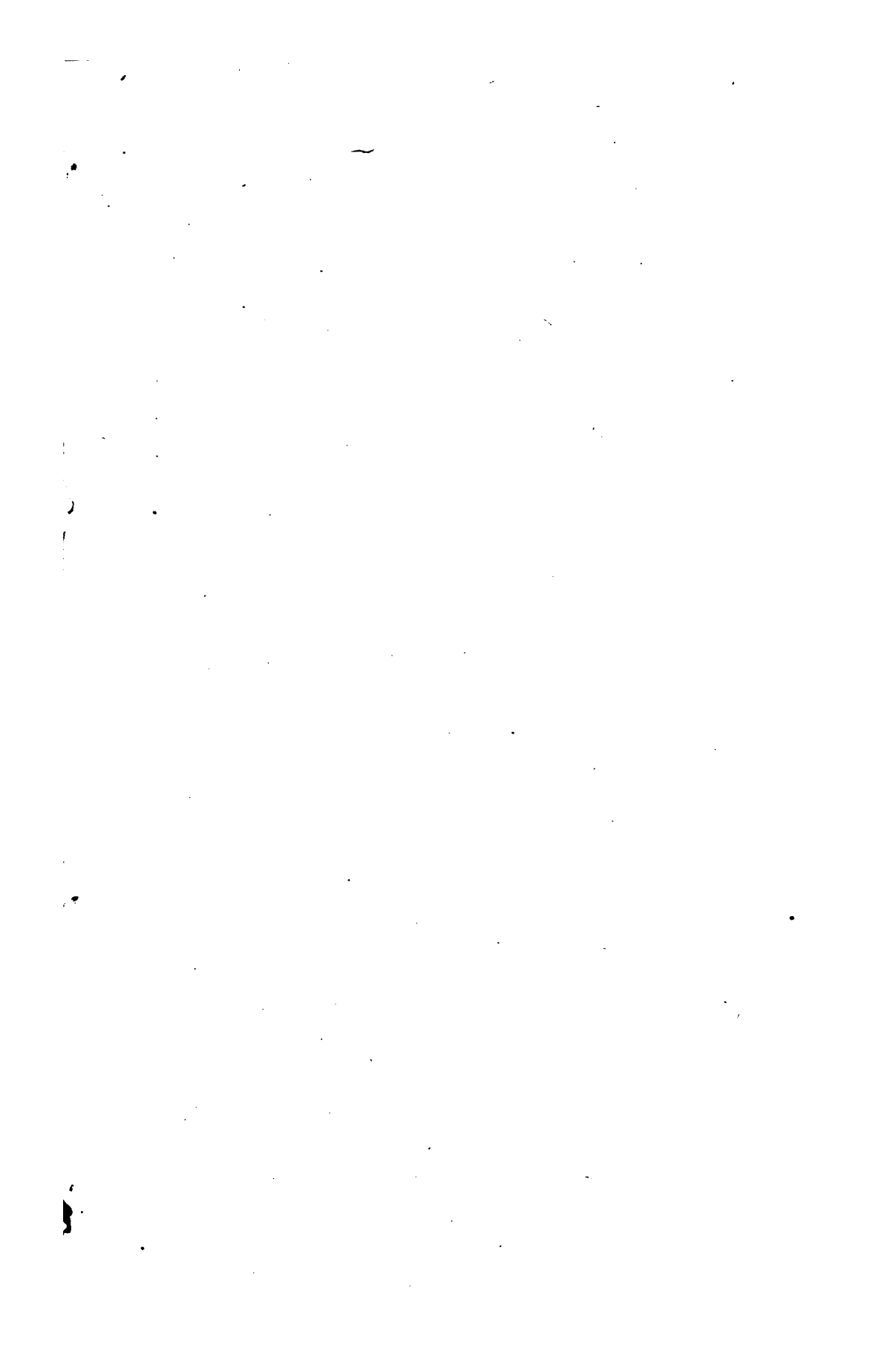
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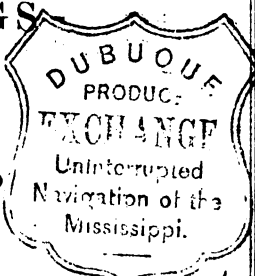
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*Has Charles Sumner D. C. am*

*Respect of  
W. B. Allison*



# Mississippi River Improvement

## CONVENTION,

HELD AT

Dubuque, Iowa, February 14th and 15th, 1866.

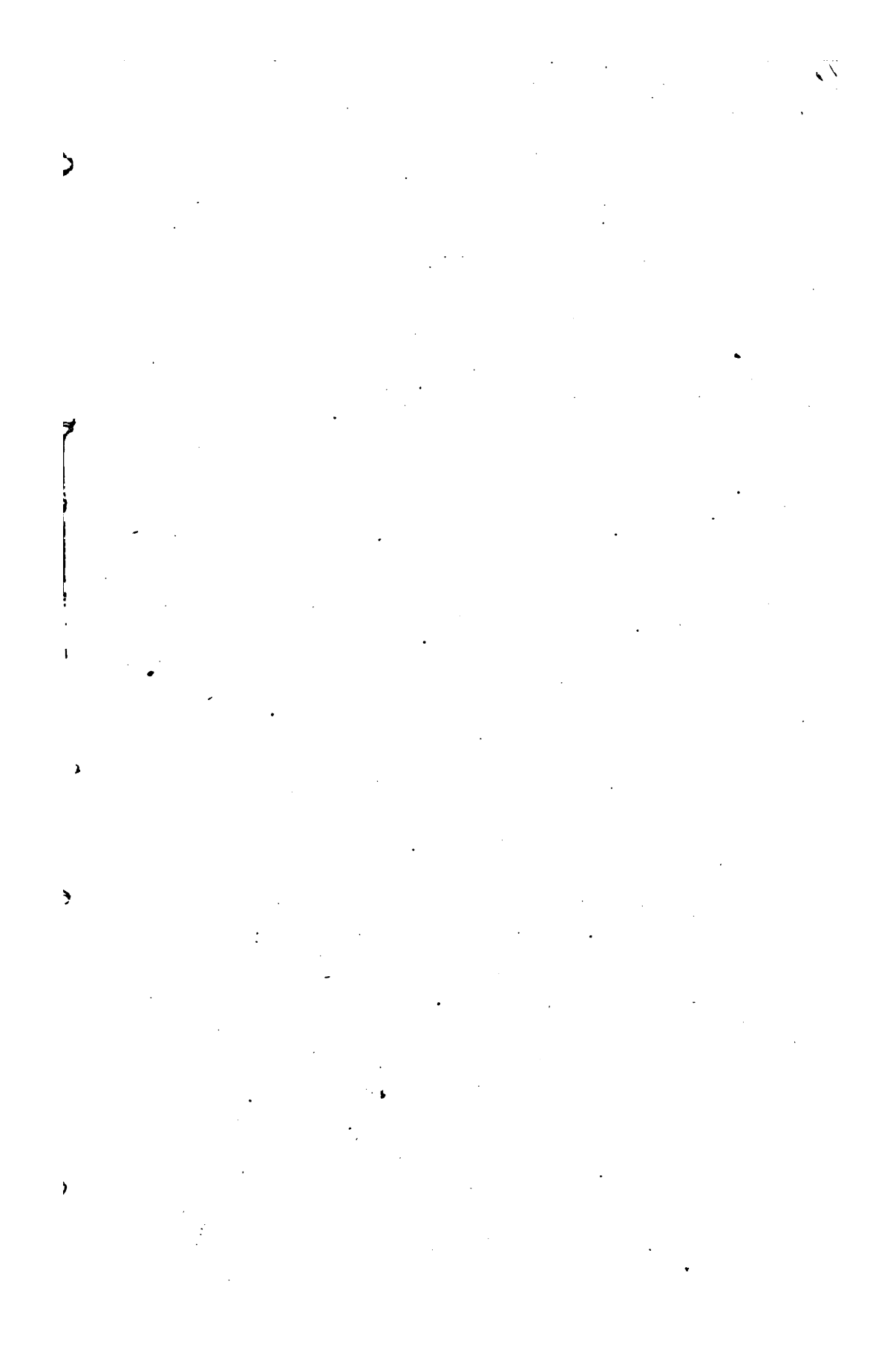


DUBUQUE :  
DAILY TIMES STEAM BOOK PRESS, 55 & 57 MAIN STREET.  
.....  
1866.



## CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
Meeting at the Hall of the Produce Exchange,.....	1
Remarks of Senator Stubbs, Representative Hale, Stanard, and others,.....	1-6
Organization of the Convention,.....	7
Gen. Vandever's Letter,.....	9-10
Speech of Mr. Robb,.....	10
Effect of present transportation on our producers,.....	10-12
Productiveness of the North-west,.....	12-14
The proportion of our Agricultural Exports, furnished by five Upper Mississippi States,.....	15-16
How much American tonage they employ,.....	17
Advance in Freights,.....	18
Effects of Competition,.....	18-19
Extortion practiced by Railroads,.....	19-21
The remedy not in Manufacturing,.....	21
A future demand for all that we can produce,.....	21-23
What we need and must have,.....	23
Nature of the Obstructions at the Rapids,.....	24
How they should be improved,.....	24-25
Commerce of the Mississippi,.....	25
Beneficial results of an improvement of the Rapids,.....	25-27
Our duty—conclusion,.....	27
Letters from distinguished Gentlemen,.....	28-35
Speech of Gen. Wiltse,.....	35-37
Remarks of Mr. Cole,.....	38
Report of Committee on Resolutions,.....	38-40
Speech of Senator Henderson,.....	40-43
Remarks of Col. Leake and Messrs. Foster and Manny,.....	43
Remarks of Maj. Floyd,.....	44
Speech of Senator Richards,.....	44-46
Speech of Mr. Bissell,.....	46-48
Remarks of Mr. Fagin,.....	48
The vote on Resolutions,.....	49
Remarks of Mr. Stanard.....	49
Extracts from Lieut. Lee's Report.....	50-52



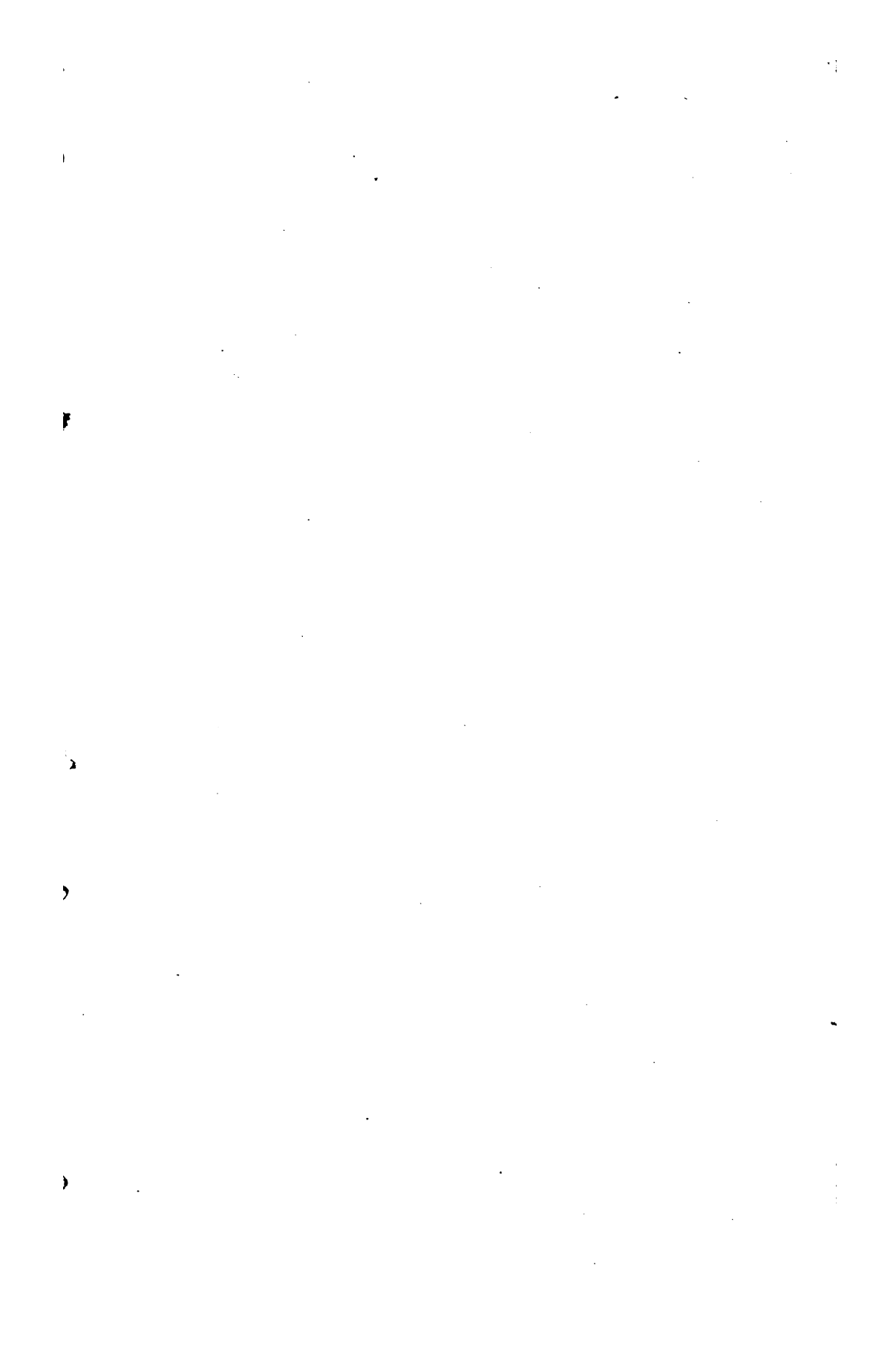
# MAP OF THE ROCK ISLAND RAPIDS. ("UPPER RAPIDS")

OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI RIVER.

From the  
Survey of Lt. A. D. Lamb.



- A. Fort Davis, Texas.
- B. Fort Davis, Texas.
- C. Fort Davis, Texas.
- D. Fort Davis, Texas.
- E. Fort Davis, Texas.
- F. Fort Davis, Texas.
- G. Fort Davis, Texas.
- H. Fort Davis, Texas.
- I. Fort Davis, Texas.
- J. Fort Davis, Texas.
- K. Fort Davis, Texas.
- L. Fort Davis, Texas.
- M. Fort Davis, Texas.
- N. Fort Davis, Texas.
- O. Fort Davis, Texas.
- P. Fort Davis, Texas.
- Q. Fort Davis, Texas.
- R. Fort Davis, Texas.
- S. Fort Davis, Texas.
- T. Fort Davis, Texas.
- U. Fort Davis, Texas.
- V. Fort Davis, Texas.
- W. Fort Davis, Texas.
- X. Fort Davis, Texas.
- Y. Fort Davis, Texas.
- Z. Fort Davis, Texas.



## A blank coordinate plane with a horizontal x-axis and a vertical y-axis intersecting at the origin. The axes are represented by thin black lines.

- X. Channels through the rocks, of sufficient depth to permit the passage of steamers. Such passages are represented by the unshaded parts.

Pub'd by the Dubuque Produce Exchange.

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Mississippi River Improvement

CONVENTION,

HELD AT

Dubuque, Iowa, February 14th and 15th, 1866.



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DAILY TIMES STEAM BOOK PRESS, 55 & 57 MAIN STREET.

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1866.

✓ Eng. 1018.73.5

1867, Jan. 14.

Gift of  
Hon. Charles Sumner -  
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## PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

### Mississippi River Improvement Convention.

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At 10 o'clock A. M. the members of the Legislature and the delegates from different towns assembled at the Hall of the Produce Exchange to reciprocate the friendly greetings incident to such an occasion. It was a matter of much regret that the recent snow storm, the severest one of the season, and the first that has blockaded the railroads, prevented the attendance of a hundred delegates who were expected by the western train.

M. KINGMAN, President, received the visitors with some appropriate remarks, and gave them a cordial welcome.

Senator STUBBS, on the part of the Legislature, responded in the following remarks :

*Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Produce Exchange :*

I am requested to say, on the part of the General Assembly of the State of Iowa, that we thank you for your cordial welcome to this the first city of our State, and hope that our visit will not only prove to be pleasant, but that good may result from it.

Our country has just passed through the great conflict for its existence, and has come from the contest not only triumphantly, but, as we trust, with renewed life and activity, presenting a spectacle of strength and greatness beyond the comprehension of us all. And now that "the clangor of arms has passed away," we may turn to the peaceful.



pursuits of life—to the development of these vast resources that spread around us, and to the improvement of our commerce.

In the wide range, in this great field of action, there is no subject that presents itself to our view which should be more zealously considered than the improvement of this "Mighty Father of Waters," the great highway of States. It is a matter in which the whole of this great Northwest is interested. A few years ago it mattered little whether the Mississippi afforded any considerable outlet or not; but within those few years States have been founded and grown up along this valley as by the move of the magician's wand, till to-day there are five millions of people interested in the accomplishment of this great enterprise, and not one of these States yet out of its infantile years.

We come to join the representatives of more than seven hundred thousand people, forming a State less than twenty years old. Our growth has been great, perhaps, I might say, unprecedented, but there are other States within the range of our vision of equal growth and prosperity.

It will be but a few short years till double this population—ten millions—will demand that this improvement be made. Should the work now be commenced and prosecuted with commendable vigor and enterprise it is almost sure that the population of the Northwest would double itself by the time of its completion, and at no very distant day this valley will be peopled with twenty-five or thirty millions of souls. And that the main avocation of these people will be agriculture no one acquainted with our rich farms and good climate will pretend to deny.

Our agricultural products are already considerable, and taken in the aggregate might be said to be great, but what stupendous aggregates of products must these plains turn off in a few years? The world must in a great measure be fed from the granaries and the meat of the States bordering on and tributary to the Mississippi, provided a channel of commerce can be opened by which these products can be carried to the markets of the world and bring remunerative compensation to the producer.

Nature has so varied the soil and climate of the United States that different portions must continue to raise different kinds of products. These States must produce the cereals, while the Southern States produce cotton, tobacco and sugar. Cotton cannot be produced profitably here, and should the proper communication be opened, corn could not be profitably raised in the South. It would pay far better for the Southern planter to raise cotton and sugar, and exchange them for our wheat, corn and pork, and such would be the result should our channels of commerce with those States be made efficient; and another result of far greater importance would also be accomplished, that of uniting the people of the North and South in the fraternal bonds of Union. There has been no disposition towards a dissolution between the East and the West, because what was to the interest of the one of these sections has also been to the interest of the other.

Can this work be accomplished? Can any influence be brought then on the council of this Nation that will inaugurate the enterprise? I am sure that no States have more nobly rallied around the standard of our common country in our great struggle than have the States of the Northwest. No Soldiers fought more gallantly than did our soldiers; no better blood was shed on the continent than was poured out by our brothers and sons. And this enterprise should not be given into the hands of the privileged few—no monopoly should control it, but it should be preserved and guaranteed to us as it came from the hand of its Maker—forever free.

Representative HALE remarked substantially as follows:

*Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Produce Exchange:*

On behalf of the members of the 11th General Assembly of the State of Iowa, I have the honor and pleasure of tendering to you the sincerest thanks of that body for the generous reception you have extended to us. In doing this words fail to express the deep sense of gratitude we feel for the kindness we have received and the distinguished consideration you have paid us since our arrival in your beautiful city.

I beg further to assure you that no unimportant matter would have induced them to rest from the duties of important legislation, in the faithful discharge of which they were earnestly engaged when your invitation to participate in the proceedings of the convention to be held here to-day reached them. That they have done so, and are now here sharing in common with other gentlemen from other States of the great Northwest the hospitality of your city, may be received as an earnest of their sympathy.

I am truly glad that here, in the great city of Dubuque, after all that has been said of her people, there is, at least, one cause which forms a common ground on which we may all, of whatever political complexion, meet and unite our efforts. It requires not an experienced nor sagacious mind to comprehend the design of the Almighty, in extending into the interior and through the heart of the greatest agricultural country in the world, rich in soil and mineral wealth, the most beautiful river, the "Father of Waters," an Ocean itself, coursing its way from the cold mountain peaks of the earth, through a country now abounding in peace, freedom and unity, to the sea. That this great natural thoroughfare, which divides a continent and yet unites her people in one common interest, should be entirely without obstacles, from its mouth to the extreme head of navigation, admits not of an argument. That the improvement of the "rapids" of the Mississippi river should have been delayed so long, when benefits so vast and incalculable are to be derived therefrom, may well indeed excite wonder.

You will pardon me for saying that, living as I do in almost the extreme southwestern part of Iowa, on the banks of another stream which sweeps its western border, I feel in common with my colleagues

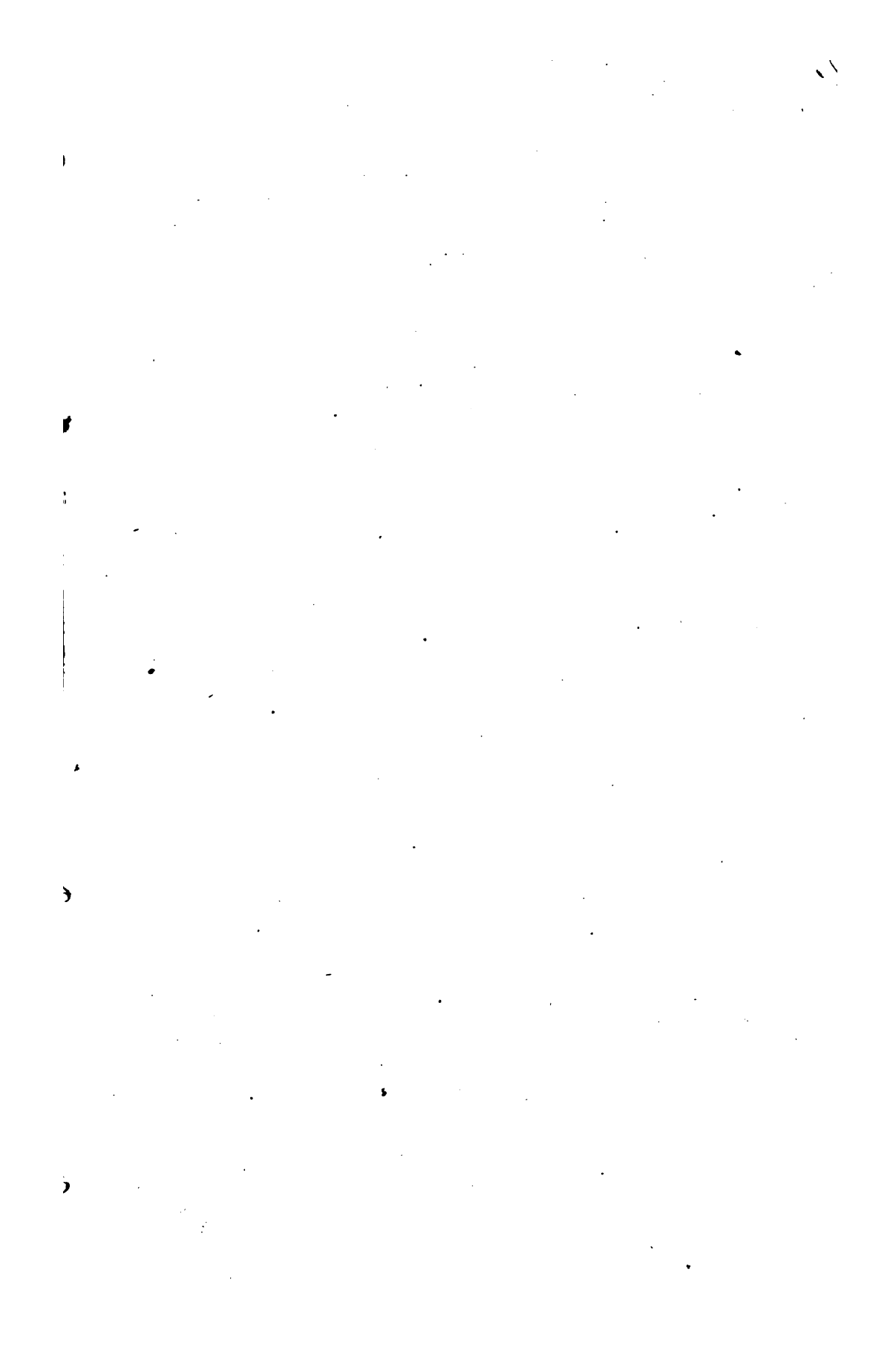
a deep and abiding interest in the early completion of this great national project. That our labors to-day will be fraught with good results in that direction, I entertain not a doubt. The combined influence and interests represented on this occasion should direct the attention of Congress at once to the subject, to the end that an appropriation should be made as early as possible, sufficient in amount to clear this mighty river at an early period of all barriers. And now gentlemen, in conclusion, permit me again to express our gratitude to you, and through you to the citizens of Dubuque, for the warm and cordial reception they have extended us.

E. O. STANARD, Esq., of St. Louis, spoke in behalf of the Merchants Exchange of that city. He stated that St. Louis was quite as much interested in the improvement of river navigation as any section of the country, and that her business men were determined to give their entire and hearty support to the movement now being made in that direction. "We are," he said, "fully resolved that every possible facility for commerce, whether by water or by rail, between St. Louis and the great Northwest, shall be afforded. We want an *inlet* and you an *outlet*, and a community of interest exists between both parties."

Mr. JOHN P. MANNY, of Rockford, Ill., said that he and other delegates from Rockford came to attend the Convention on account of the interest which Northern Illinois felt in the improvement of the river. He said there was a plan on foot to improve Rock river, and extend a canal to Green Bay, a work that would in a few years be accomplished by the people of Wisconsin and Illinois, but they did not design to ask an appropriation for that purpose at present. He was glad to meet so large a number who had in view the important object of the Convention.

Capt. A. ESTEY, of Galena, said the people of that city were all in earnest for better navigation.

Mr. T. H. BOWEN, of Sand Spring, said in substance, that no words or figures could tell or estimate the importance of making free navigation of the river in reference to the prosperity of the Northwest. He thought the people of the Northwest had now a right to ask that Congress shall do a little for the Mississippi while appropriating millions for improving eastern rivers and harbors.



five. In case improvement by means of a canal is determined upon, the same shall be so constructed as not to interfere with the navigation of the natural channel of the river; and such canal shall be free from tolls or other charges upon the commerce of the river; and any water power created by the construction of such a work shall be the property of the United States. Whatever may be the plan of the improvement, it is provided that it shall be such as to afford safe and uninterrupted navigation for steamboats and other vessels drawing four feet of water. The bill also provides for the issuing of two million dollars in loans of the United States, drawing six per cent. interest lawful money, the proceeds of which are to be applied to the construction of the improvement.

This bill, you perceive, leaves the particular mode or plan of improvement an open question to be determined upon by competent parties after a careful survey and examination.

Diversities of opinion are so great in regard to the best mode of improvement, that any bill providing for a specific plan would certainly fail to unite all our western members in its support. Division would be fatal. I am sorry to say that special legislation in behalf of the improvement of the Rapids of the Mississippi River does not meet with the cordial approval of all. Some of the friends and advocates of the improvement of Western Rivers think that we ought to rely upon a general River and Harbor bill. Past experience, however, admonishes that a general River and Harbor bill is a very poor dependence for Western Rivers. Such measures usually break down under their own accumulated weight. If such a bill succeeds one year it may fail the next. What we want for these Rapids of the Mississippi River, is such legislation by Congress as shall commit the government not only to the commencement of the work, but to its prosecution and speedy completion. Those rocky barriers are much more formidable and dangerous obstructions to the commerce of the river than ordinary snags and sand bars. Once removed, however, they can never reform or accumulate. When we get these rocky rapids improved we shall then be only just upon a par with other parts where only snags and sand bars abound in the river.

We want both measures carried out—a special law for cleaning out the rapids of the river—and also a provision for removing snags and sand bars under a general River and Harbor bill.

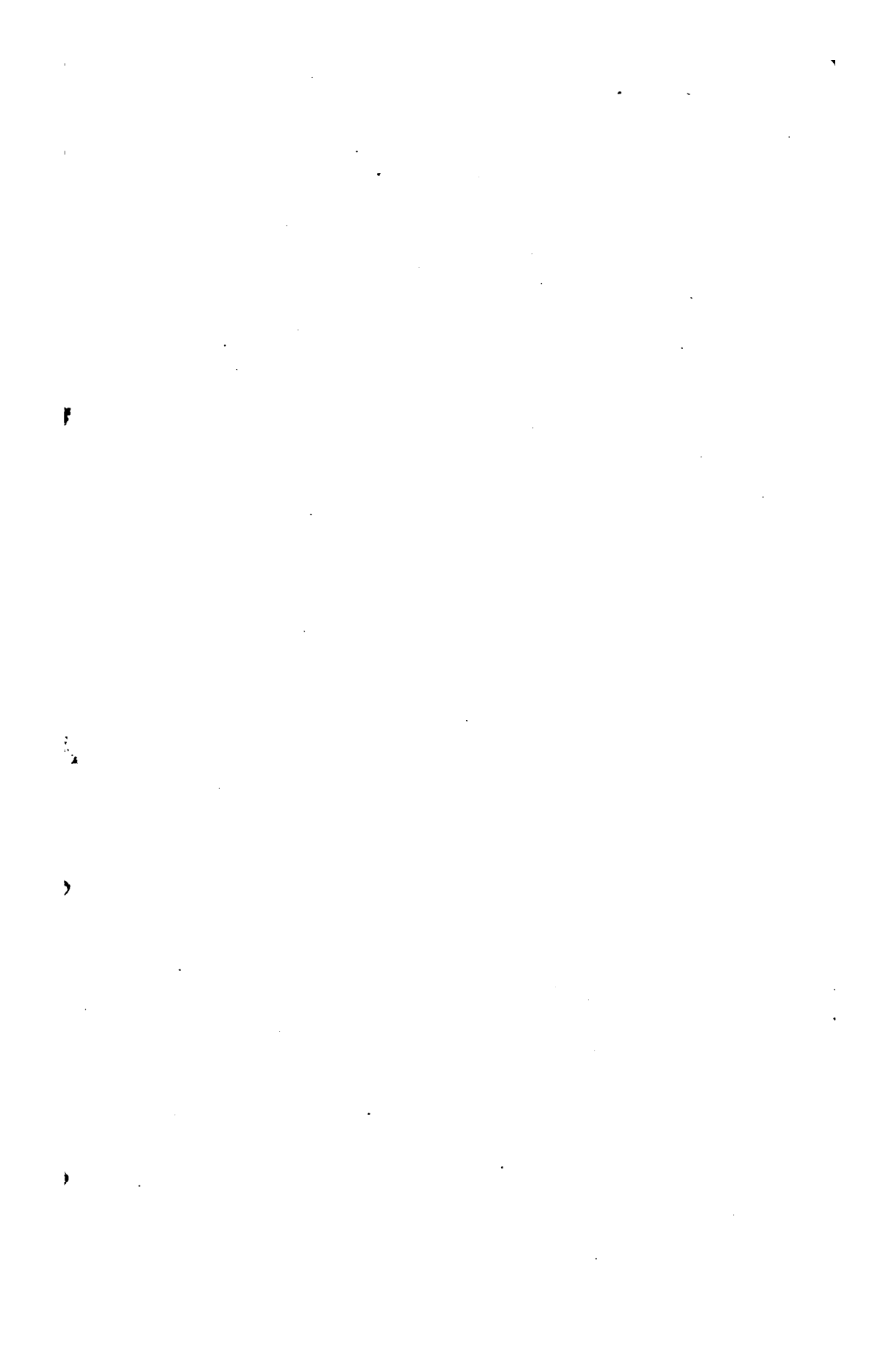
It affords me great pleasure to state that the Hon. W. B. Allison seconds this measure with great zeal and ability. Our entire delegation in Congress will, I have no doubt, accord their cordial support.

As you are about to hold a convention in relation to these matters, perhaps these views may not be uninteresting at this time, and I submit them for such consideration as your board may choose to give them.

Very Respectfully,

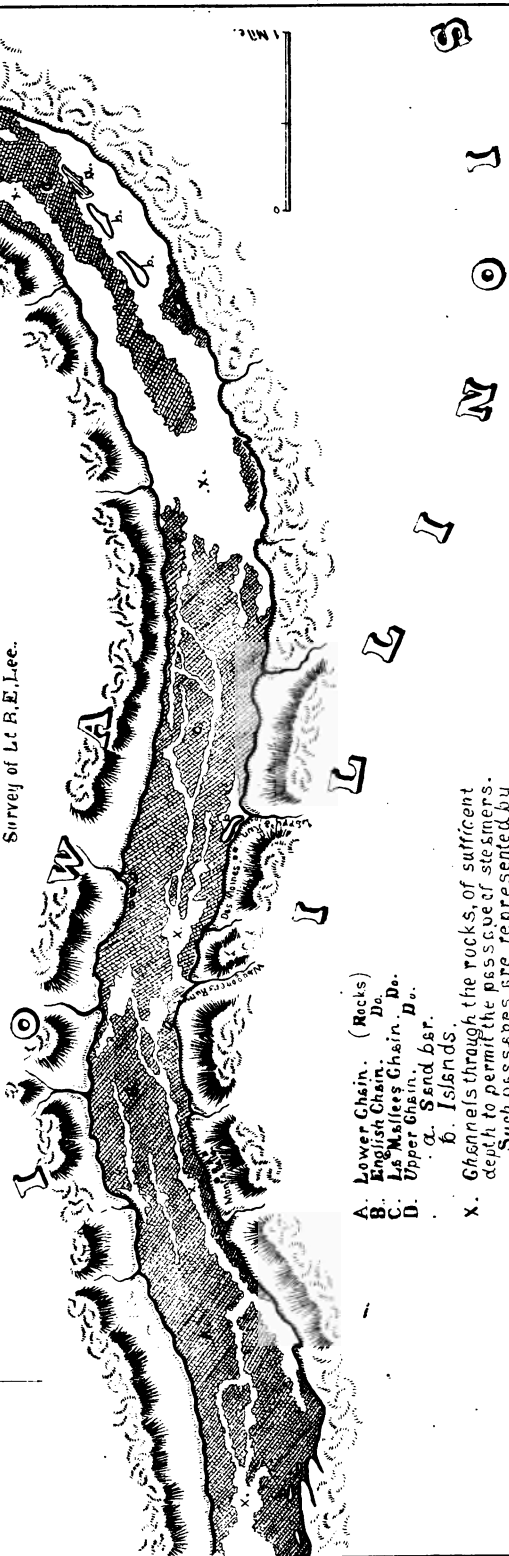
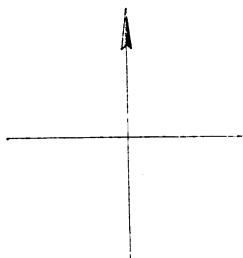
Your obedient servant,

WM. VANDEVER.



# MAP OF THE DES MOINES RAPIDS. ("LOWER RAPIDS") OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.

From the  
Survey of Lt. R. E. Lee.



- A. Lower Chain. (Rocks)
- B. English Chain. Do.
- C. Is. Malles Chain. Do.
- D. Upper Chain. Do.
- a. Sand bar.
- b. Islands.
- x. Channels through the rocks, of sufficient depth to permit the passage of steamers. Such passages are represented by the unshaded parts.

Pubd by the Dubuque Produce Exchange.

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Mississippi River Improvement

CONVENTION,

HELD AT

Dubuque, Iowa, February 14th and 15th, 1866.



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proximate the loss they sustain in the reduced value of every species of property. In 1860 the aggregate value of all the farming lands in Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Minnesota and Iowa, was \$918,094,792. Who can conjecture where among the hundreds of millions would be its value to-day if the producers of these States enjoyed the means and facilities of a just and reasonable transportation tariff to the seaboard. The productive capacity of the five States above named, which lie along the upper Mississippi was never so great as now. Yet, there is a feeling of great depression everywhere in these States, a depression of which every producer and business man is made keenly sensible. In the midst of what ought to be unbounded prosperity, we are staggering under a weight of oppression that is crushing the very spirit out of our people. Until the past year our producers could better endure the burden of exorbitant rates of transportation, because under the changed conditions which a state of war had wrought in trade, they realized unparalleled prices for all kinds of produce. But in a single year the chief products of these States have depreciated in their market value in Chicago—pork 20 per cent, wheat 30 per cent, oats and corn 60 per cent. Here is an average depreciation on four products of 42 per cent, yet the cost of transportation has remained essentially the same. Here is a difficulty that must be remedied or our industry be ruined.

The extent of the injury, the importance of this question, and the magnitude of the interests involved in its solution, will more clearly appear on an examination of the productiveness of the five States named. In 1860 the whole number of acres of improved land in all the States and Territories was

	163,261,389
Of this	
Missouri contained.....	6,246,871
Illinois.....	13,254,473
Iowa.....	3,780,253
Wisconsin.....	3,746,036
Minnesota.....	554,397
	27,579,030
Or a fraction less than one sixth.	

The total value of crops for 1864 is estimated by the Agricultural Bureau of the Department of the Interior to have been

	\$1,564,543,690
Of this sum	
Illinois produced.....	\$214,488,426
Wisconsin " .....	51,933,862
Missouri " .....	52,996,592
Iowa " .....	71,100,481
Minnesota " .....	13,168,123

\$403,692,474

Or more than one-fourth of the value of the entire crops of the country. But these estimates of value are the estimated value of the

various products in the States where produced. In this way the value of articles in the above States appears to a great disadvantage, because being so far from market, they are rated much less than the same articles in other States, especially those near the seaboard. The same is true of the estimated value of the live stock, which, on the 1st of January, 1865, was

Of this Illinois had.....	\$116,588,288	\$990,879,128
Missouri had.....	44,431,766	
Iowa had.....	66,572,496	
Wisconsin had.....	36,911,165	
Minnesota had.....	8,860,015	
		\$273,363,730

Or more than one-fourth. A juster standard by which to measure the productiveness of these States would be a comparison of the amount of their respective products, since the value is so largely affected by the distance from market.

The great staples of agriculture are wheat, corn, beef and pork. Comparing these, we find that the total number of bushels of wheat produced in all the States and Territories in 1864 (except the Cotton States, whose production was almost nominal, probably not more than one sixth of what it was in 1860) was

Illinois produced.....	33,371,173	160,695, 823 bush.
Missouri ".....	3,281,514	"
Wisconsin ".....	14,168,317	"
Iowa ".....	12,649,807	"
Minnesota ".....	2,634,975	"
		66,105,786 "

Or a fraction less than one-half.

The total number of bushels of corn produced was

Illinois produced.....	138,356,135 bus.	530451,403 bus,
Missouri ".....	36,635,011 "	
Wisconsin ".....	10,087,053 "	
Iowa ".....	55,261,240 "	
Minnesota ".....	4,647,329 "	
		244,986,768 "

Or nearly one-half.

The whole number of cattle and oxen, January 1, 1865, was

Illinois had.....	978,700	7,072,591
Missouri ".....	471,006	
Wisconsin ".....	388,760	
Iowa ".....	561,338	
Minnesota ".....	127,175	
		2,526,979

Or more than one-third.

The total number of hogs was

Illinois had.....	2,034,231	13,070,887
Missouri: " .....	988,857	
Wisconsin " .....	340,638	
Iowa " .....	1,423,567	
Minnesota " .....	109,016	
		<u>4,896,506</u>

Or more than one-third

The entire population of the United States in 1860 was

Illinois contained.....	1,711,951	31,443,322
Iowa " .....	674,913	
Missouri " .....	1,182,012	
Minnesota " .....	172,123	
Wisconsin " .....	775,881	
		<u>4,516,880</u>

Or about one-seventh.

Thus it will be seen that these five States possessing only one-seventh of all the population and *one-sixth* of all the improved land, nevertheless in 1864 produced more than *one-fourth* in value of the entire crop—more than *one-fourth* in value of all the live stock—more than *one-third* in number of all the cattle and hogs, and nearly *one-half* of all the wheat and corn grown in the United States. Here we find four and one-half millions of agriculturalists along the Upper Mississippi, producing in a single year from *one-third* to *one-half* of all the production of the leading staples of an estimated value of *six hundred and seventy seven millions, fifty six thousand two hundred and four dollars*.

It is not without difficulty that a strictly correct basis for these estimates could be selected. If based on the census of 1860, it would be unjust to the five States named, because they have since increased rapidly in productiveness. Still by the census of 1860 they would appear as producing from one fourth to one third of all the chief agricultural staples, produced in all the States and Territories. Taking the returns of 1864 as a basis, an exact estimate of the Cereal productions of the Cotton States cannot be obtained; but they were so small that they could not materially modify the deductions here made. While the general productiveness of the Country in nearly all branches of agriculture, has considerably decreased the States of Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota, show large increase in every branch of productive industry. And this besides promptly furnishing all the men and means required of them by the Government to carry on the war.

Having ascertained the productiveness of these States, let us look at their influence upon the prosperity of the country by way of contributions to its commerce. In 1861-2-3 the credit of the nation abroad was greatly supported, and to a great extent maintained by the unusually large exportations of wheat and flour.

## In 1860-1 The United States exported:

	Wheat, bush.	Flour, bbls.	Value.
To Great Britain.....	24,510,961	2,429,117	\$44,622,744
To Canada.....	4,148,029	83,617	4,316,036
Total.....	28,658,990	2,512,734	\$48,938,780

## In 1861-2 the United States exported

	Wheat, bush.	Flour, bbls.	Value.
To Great Britain.....	22,905,505	2,339,446	\$39,111,917
To Canada.....	4,538,472	118,643	5,075,231
Total.....	27,444,977	2,458,089	\$44,187,148

## In 1862-3 the United States exported

	Wheat, bush.	Flour, bbls.	Value.
To Great Britain.....	27,325,789	1,794,496	\$47,827,715
To Canada.....	6,512,801	232,160	7,820,264
Total.....	33,848,540	2,026,656	\$55,647,979

There was exported during these fiscal years from the United States to other countries than Great Britain and Canada, wheat and flour to a value of between \$4,000,000 and \$5,000,000 annually. But strange and unjust as it may appear while under the operations of the present tariff, the North West has been compelled to buy the products of Eastern manufacturers, the East has by no means fully reciprocated by buying its bread-stuffs of the West, for under the reciprocity treaty, Canada could undersell us to the extent of her surplus, and accordingly we find that New England and New York imported wheat and flour from Canada in

1861 to the value of.....	2,803,997
1862 " " .....	6,008,684
1863 " " .....	3,180,698

Here is an annual average of \$4,000,000 for wheat and flour imported, which amount offsets the yearly exports in wheat and flour of the United States to other countries than Great Britain and Canada. The above tables, giving the amount exported to Great Britain and Canada, therefore represent the correct quantity and value of the exports of wheat and flour from the United States, for those fiscal years, respectively.—Comparing the total amount exported with the amount of surplus wheat and flour shipped in those years from the ports on the west side of Lake Michigan, and we find that there was shipped East in 1861:

	Wheat, Bush.	Flour, Bbls.
From Milwaukee.....	13,300,495	674,474
From Chicago.....	15,835,953	1,603,920
From other Ports, Est.....	1,400,000	240,000
Total.....	30,536,448	2,518,394

In 1862 there was shipped :

	Wheat.	Flour.
From Milwaukee.....	14,915,680	711,405
From Chicago.....	13,808,898	1,739,849
From other Ports, Est.....	1,300,000	245,000
Total.....	30,024,578	2,696,254

In 1863 there was shipped :

	Wheat,	Flour,
From Milwaukee.....	12,837,620	608,526
From Chicago.....	10,389,381	1,536,690
From Green Bay.....	586,805	140,397
From Port Washington.....	76,880	4,164
From Sheboygan.....	255,436	19,011
From Kenosha.....	122,470	
From Racine.....	747,898	12,457
Total.....	25,016,490	2,316,245

From these official figures, it appears that in the fiscal years 1861-2-3, the United States exported

Bush. Wheat,	Bbls. Flour,	Value,
89,941,508	6,997,470	\$148,673,907

During those same years we shipped from the lake ports named :

Bush. Wheat,	Bbls. Flour,
85,577,516	7,530,893

Reduce the flour to bushels and we have :

	Bushels.
Entire exports of wheat from the U. S. for the three years....	124,828,902
Shipments from the Lake Ports named for the three years....	123,231,981

Thus the official statistics demonstrate that the above named lake ports supplied, within one and a half million bushels, the wheat exports of the entire country. Now the surplus forwarded from those ports was the product almost exclusively of Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota. Southern Illinois and Missouri market but comparatively little of their wheat on the lake, so that their surplus does not appear in the above aggregate. Their surplus, however, is about equivalent to the amount of wheat from north western Indiana and south western Michigan, which is marketed at Chicago. But in addition to this, Missouri, Iowa and southern Illinois have supplied nearly all the flour for the Territories of Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Dakota and a part of Nebraska. Taking into consideration the exports of these States west as well as east, and no reasonable mind can question the fact that these five Upper Mississippi States have been and are now furnishing from their own surplus, either directly or indirectly, all the wheat and flour that is exported from the United States, equal in value to \$148,673,907 in the fiscal years 1861-2-3, or \$49,557,969 annually.

An examination of the statistics fully establishes the additional

fact that these five States during the years 1861-2-3 shipped East 150 per cent. more corn, and meal, and 25 per cent. more pork products than were exported from the entire country during the same period. These States not only supply the export wheat of the entire country but also the export corn and pork products. The contributions, therefore, made by Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri and Minnesota, to the exports of the United States in these three leading agricultural staples alone, are as follows :

	1860-1	1861-2	1862-3
Wheat,.....	\$48,938,780	\$44,187,148	\$55,647,979
Corn and Meal,.....	6,387,160	9,609,879	9,623,357
Pork Products,, .....	4,687,784	10,217,281	16,424,338
Total.....	\$60,013,724	\$64,017,308	\$81,695,674

Excluding gold, silver and bullion which are hardly analagous to other products, and the entire exports of domestic products, of the United States amounted to

1860-1	1861-2	1862-3
\$217,666,953	\$190,699,387	\$260,666,110.

The average exports of the country for the three years was \$222,874,183,33, and the average exports which these five States contributed in wheat, corn and pork alone was

\$68,575,568,66

Or very nearly *one-third*.

In 1861-2-3 the average yearly tonnage of all American vessels engaged in trans-oceanic commerce and entering the ports of the United States was 2,564,257 tons, and the average tonnage of all the vessels of all countries engaged in oceanic commerce and entering the ports of the United States was 5,341,867 tons. Now the three staples contributed by these five Upper Mississippi States to our exports were equivalent to 1,315,000 tons annually. They, therefore, not only contributed one-third in value to our entire exports, but gave employment upon the ocean to more than one-half of all our American tonnage, which was equivalent to one-fourth of all the tonnage of all nations, our own included, entering the United States and engaged in trans-oceanic commerce. History cannot furnish a parallel. But for the relief afforded by the productive industry of this section our national credit would have been seriously impaired, and ships must have rotted at their wharves.

Thus far we have taken into consideration only three leading staples. There are numerous other articles shipped from these States. In 1862 the total value, estimated at the market price on the Lake of all our products exported East was \$81,232,354. Comparing the value of our products in Chicago in 1862, with their value now, and we find that on wheat, corn, flour and hogs, there has been an average advance of 34 per cent. About the same advance has taken place on other articles. So that if our present surplus shipped East be the

same in kind and quantity as in 1862, it would be 34 per cent. more valuable, or equal now to \$108,851,354. In these calculations only the agricultural products of this region have been taken into consideration. But there are other interests worthy of attention. In 1860 the total value of all the mining, manufacturing and mechanic products of these five States was \$147,250,000. In 1863 as shown by the returns of the Internal Revenue Officers for the several States, it was not less than \$204,150,000. Of this their surplus of Lead, Lumber, distilled spirits and malt liquors could not fall short of \$12,000,000 thus making the surplus sent East not less than \$120,000,000. And this is doubtless a reasonable estimate of the value of the surplus crops and products annually exported by the four and a half millions of people living in the region of the Upper Mississippi. Here are five agricultural States scarcely yet in full process of development, declaring an annual dividend to the country of not less than \$120,000,000. Shall *their* grievances not be heard and *their* rights respected?

We have stated that the industry of these States is being destroyed by the excessive freights exacted for the transportation of their productions. Since 1860 the Mississippi river has been virtually closed by a state of war so that our producers have had no alternative but to let their produce rot upon their hands or pay whatever rates of transportation might be exacted. For removing this enormous surplus there have, except in a few localities, been no facilities but those afforded by the railroads, and these at times being taxed to their utmost capacity, have become unpleasantly and oppressively independent. The advance in freights made by the different Illinois Railroads and Canal since 1861 is indicated in the following table in the per centage of increase on first class freight, wheat, corn, lumber and live stock. The average per cent. of increase on all classes of freight is also given:

RAILROADS.	1st Class	Wheat	Corn	Lumber	Live Stock	Average
Northwestern, .....	92	61	43	26	64	75
C. B. & Q., .....	75	56	33			55
Rock Island, .....	84	85	35	34	91	54
Chicago & Alton, .....	48	77	45	50	100	64
Illinois Central, .....	65	66	66	61	65	64
Illinois Canal, .....		58	58		85	70

Here is an average increase on all classes of freight by the various routes across Illinois of *sixty-four per cent.*

The beneficial effects of competition are strikingly exemplified in the varying rates of freight on these roads. The Illinois and Michigan canal connects Peoria with Chicago; and the average charge for wheat by this canal was 8½ cents per bushel for 1865. In order to compete with the canal, the Chicago & Rock Island R. R. lowered its freight on wheat from Peoria to 10 cts. per bushel. Yet this same Road

charges 17 cts. for a bushel of wheat from Davenport, which is only 23 miles farther from Chicago than Peoria, the former being 184 miles and the latter 161. So the Illinois Central will carry wheat from Dunleith to St. Louis in the same season for about the same that it charges to Chicago, and yet the distance is twice as great. Competition by river is the only reason for this difference. On the North Western Road the freight on a bushel of wheat from Woodworth to Chicago, 100 miles, is only  $8\frac{1}{2}$  cts., while the freight on a bushel of wheat by the same Road from Dixon, also 100 miles from Chicago, is 15 cts. The reason is Woodworth is only seven miles from Kenosha, a port on the Lake, from which grain can be conveniently shipped by water, while Dixon is in the interior and has no connection with Chicago except by the Northwestern Road. Thus the farmer at Woodworth gets  $6\frac{1}{2}$  cts per bushel more for his wheat than the farmer at Dixon, simply because the one has the benefit of competition, while the other is at the mercy of a monopoly. Now this proves two important facts:

1st. That competition will materially reduce freights. 2d. That the railroads can afford to carry wheat from the Mississippi River to Chicago at least seven cents per bushel less than they are now charging, with a reasonable reduction for intermediate points. They can also afford a similar reduction on other classes of freight, and such a reduction would save millions annually to the pockets of our producers.

No doubt the operating expenses of railroads have considerably increased since 1861. But then all the property of the railroad companies has greatly advanced in value. The improvement of the country along the lines of the railroads very materially enhances the value of the roads. Besides, with scarcely any advance in freights, the earnings of our Western roads would be much larger now than five years ago, because then these States were hardly sufficiently developed to give full employment to the various railroads, while now our productiveness would tax their utmost capacity, if the rates of transportation were only reasonable. Whether or not the railroads were justified in making such advances in freights, as they have done, will best appear from an examination of their earnings. The following table gives their receipts and profits in 1864:

	Gross Receipts.	Net Profits.
North-Western,.....	\$6,820,749 75	\$1,802,771 93
B. Ch. & Q. R. R.,.....	4,702,817 06	1,998,028 62
Chicago & R. I.,.....	3,359,390 80	1,578,822 93
C. & A. & St. L.,.....	2,805,623 96	1,066,593 43
Ill. Cent.,.....	6,403,034 70	2,536,781 27
Total,.....	\$24,091,616 27	\$8,977,998 18

The cost of these respective roads and all their property, up to and including 1864, was:

Northwestern Railroad,.....	\$39,680,452 06
Chicago, Burlington & Quincy,.....	15,055,252 87
Chicago & Rock Island,.....	8,512,183 05
Chicago & Alton Railroad,.....	11,062,300 00
Illinois Central Railroad,.....	30,749,087 80



This cost includes the cost of constructing the roads and all capital since invested in them. Comparing the cost of these roads with the net earnings, and we find the profits for 1864 to have been :

Northwestern Railroad,.....	profit 4½ per cent.
Chicago, Burlington & Quincy,.....	do 13½ do
Chicago & Rock Island,.....	do 18½ do
Chicago & Alton,.....	do 9½ do
Illinois Central,.....	do 8 do

Or an average of 11 per cent. on all the capital invested in those roads up to 1865. The average profit realized by the Michigan Central, Michigan Southern and C. P. & Ft. Wayne, for the same year was 12 per cent.

The estimated earnings of these Illinois roads for 1865 are given by a competent authority as follows :

	Gross Earnings.
Northwestern Railroad,.....	\$8,020,256 00
Chicago Burlington & Quincy,.....	6,302,603 00
Chicago & Rock Island,.....	3,365,795 00
Chicago & Alton (same as 1864),.....	2,805,623 96
Illinois Central,.....	7,120,000 00
Total,.....	\$27,614,277 96

The same authority has not given the estimated expenses of operating these roads for 1865. But as 1864 was emphatically the year of high prices in labor and material, the expenses for 1865 could not have essentially exceeded those of 1864. In 1864, the aggregate cost of operating these roads was \$15,113,618,308; estimating the same expenses for 1865, and the aggregate profits of these five roads for 1865 were \$12,500,659 87, or 40 per cent. more than in 1864, making an average profit on the cost of the roads of about fifteen per cent.

Certainly the most liberal advance in freight that these roads could claim would be an advance proportionate to that of our produce. We have seen that produce is now 34 per cent. higher than at the period of low prices, while these railroad freights are 64 per cent. Here is an advance of 30 per cent. that is simply extortion. Allowing one-third of the gross earnings of these roads to have been from carrying passengers, and we have the freight earnings alone for

1864,.....	\$16 061,077 52
1865,.....	\$18,409,518 64

These amounts being 30 per cent. above what the advance in produce could justify, it follows that in 1864 the people of Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin and Minnesota paid to these five roads for freight, over and above what was just or reasonable in any view of the case, the sum of

	\$4,818,323 25
And in 1865,.....	5,522,855 92

Here is an aggregate of over ten million dollars that has literally been stolen within the past two years, from the pockets of our produ-

cers and business men, by five railroad companies. And this vast sum does not include the excessive amounts paid to Wisconsin roads, and to the various lines from Chicago to the seaboard. We are only able to get at the magnitude of the extortion practiced in Illinois alone, and between the Mississippi river and the Lake. Could we estimate the amount paid in exorbitant and oppressive rates over the other lines, the aggregate would be appalling; not less probably than \$12,000,000 per annum. The annual surplus productions of these States we have already found to be \$120,000,000; hence we are being robbed of one-tenth of our surplus annually. Is it not quite time that we ceased paying such enormous tribute to these oppressive monopolies? Can the industry of any people bear up under such extortion? Such are the grievances of the people of these States and their chief causes. Where and what is the remedy?

It is urged by some that our productiveness as an agricultural people, will soon exceed the demand, and therefore we must turn our attention to manufactures. But this is a mistaken idea. Everything evidences the fact that nature has designed this region as the granary of the world. Nature makes no mistakes. Let us adhere to her plan and our interests will be best subserved. It is idle to attempt to force manufacturing. Manufacturing requires capital, and capital must select its own time and place of operation. Men may, and do, to a great extent, restrict and regulate according to their means and necessities, their use of all articles of physical and domestic comfort and convenience, produced by human skill, but Nature, in her economy, has fixed a very narrow limit, beyond which mankind cannot exist without bread; hence the demand and necessity for breadstuffs must always be more constant and uniform than for any other article of consumption. The only possible source of apprehension is that unusually great and wide spread productiveness for a series of years might create a supply far exceeding the demand. But is such a state of things at all likely to occur?

We consume in this country an average of about five bushels of wheat to the inhabitant, but if necessary can get along with something less, as we have many substitutes, such as corn, rye and buckwheat. It is estimated that our population will be in

1870.....	42,000,000
1880.....	56,000,000
1890.....	77,000,000
1900.....	100,000,000

Accordingly, we can use for home consumption alone of wheat in

1870.....	210,000,000 bush.
1880.....	280,000,000 "
1890.....	385,000,000 "
1900.....	500,000,000 "

From 1790 to 1817 breadstuffs were the chief exports of some of the New England and nearly all of the Atlantic States. Now New England produces but eleven quarts of wheat to each in-

habitant, and consumes annually of agricultural productions \$50,000,000 more than she produces, Pennsylvania the first, and New York the third among the States in production of wheat in 1860, are now calling upon the West, the former for ten per cent and the latter for sixty per cent of its bread, while Ohio, so long the promise land of the emigrant, is now growing but a very little more wheat than will meet the wants of a population equal to her own. Nearly every State in South America, and nearly every nation in Europe imports agricultural products, and in 1863 the United States sent its breadstuffs to sixty different foreign markets.

In England, for instance, it is estimated by the Mark Lane Express that the average consumption of wheat is six bushels to the inhabitant. The limits of her own production are about 120,000,000 bushels. From 1850 to 1857 she imported 40,000,000 bushels annually to feed her own population. From 1857 to 1864 she imported 56,000,000 bushels annually, and now she is importing 72,000,000 bushels annually. Keeping up the same proportion she will import annually from

1871-78.....	88,000,000
1878-85.....	104,000,000
1885-92.....	125,000,000
1900 .....	150,000,000

The population of Great Britain has increased very little the past ten years. The above estimate is founded upon the supposition that her population in 1900 will be only 45,000,000. Should it be larger, then her importations of wheat must be correspondingly greater.

The wheat-growing countries of Europe, except Russia and Turkey have about reached their limits of production, so that Europe's constantly growing population must cause increased demand.

Whence is this growing demand to be satisfied? Russia, the chief grain exporting country of the Old World, from 1857 to 1862, inclusive, only exported annually

Wheat .....	19,897,292 bush
Corn.....	2,211,932 "

In this country, the Southern States will never be our competitors in the production of the leading cereals, other products adapted to their climate being more profitable, consequently the great bulk of the wheat, corn and pork must be produced in the Northwestern States.

In 1860, the whole number of acres of improved land in the United States was 163,261,389; the entire crop of wheat produced, we have seen, was 171,183,381 bushels. Now, suppose the number of acres of all the improved lands to be doubled in 1890 (a result hardly possible in view of the injuries which years of war have inflicted) and the ratio of production to be the same as in 1860, we should then have an annual production of only 342,366,762 bushels, and, yet, we have seen that if our own population increases as statisticians esti-

mate it will increase, we shall need for home consumption in 1890, 385,000,000 bushels, or 42,000,000 bushels more than we shall produce, when we have doubled the area of cultivated land in all the States and Territories, with a productiveness equal to that of 1860. From these data it is evident that the great question twenty or thirty years hence will be, not where can the Northwest find a market for her surplus produce, but how shall production be increased so as to meet the crying demand for breadstuffs that will come from Europe and our older sister States.

Any people who possess such superior advantages of soil, climate, mechanical labor, and cheap transportation, as to enable them to compete successfully in breadstuffs, in the leading markets of the world, have nothing to fear. They are more potent and independent than any monarch or state in Christendom. It is idle to talk of becoming manufacturers. Relief from our present condition is not to be found in a change of pursuits, but in a change of the means and routes of transportation, in order that we may reap the full benefits of active competition. Railroads cannot meet the wants of our commerce. Water transportation we must have, because cheaper and of infinite capacity. This nature has designed for us in forming a commercial artery which runs through the heart of this producing region, connecting it with the sea.

The only difficulty now preventing these States from sending their products to New York by water are the rapids at Rock Island and Keokuk. How to remove these obstructions so as to secure uninterrupted navigation of the Mississippi, is the question at present of all absorbing interest to the people of the Northwest. And if the people of this section are true to themselves they will hold all other questions and projects in abeyance until this work of more than national importance has been accomplished.

Now how are these improvements to be made? Certainly not by individuals. It is an undertaking beyond the reach of their means or power. Nor should this be done by the several States bordering on the river. It would redound to the immediate benefit of every State in the great valley of the Mississippi, while the entire nation has a common interest in the commerce that floats upon its bosom. Where so many States are directly interested, and the whole country would be immeasurably benefited, it becomes the especial province of the General Government to undertake and complete the work. And this the Government is already pledged to do by its acts and resolves.

In March, 1836, General Jones, then representing Michigan Territory in Congress, (Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota were then a part of that Territory), offered a resolution directing the Committee on Post Roads to enquire into the expediency of surveying and removing the obstructions to navigation at the Des Moines and Rock River rapids of the Mississippi. An appropriation of \$75,000 was made for that purpose. In 1836 a bill passed

both Houses of Congress, appropriating \$200,000 for the removal of these obstructions. It was vetoed by the President, but so plainly just was the measure, and so evident its necessity, that Congress promptly passed it notwithstanding the President's objections. By means of these small appropriations, some of the most serious obstructions were removed, and the navigation of the River materially benefited thereby.

In 1837 a carefully detailed survey of these rapids was made under the direction of Lt. R. E. Lee, by a corps of engineers.—Similar surveys had been made by Lt. Buford in 1829, and by Capt. Shreve in 1835, and a much later survey has been made by Lieut. Warren,—all under direction of the War Department.

The reports of these competent engineers all agree, that the feasible plan for the improvement of these rapids is by excavations of rocks in the natural channel of the river. The upper rapids are fourteen miles long, with a fall of 25 feet. The lower rapids are eleven miles long, with a descent of 24 feet. The nature of the obstructions is not a continuous plane of rock with shoal waters the entire distance, but the rocks consist of several separate chains at each of the rapids, running across the river and forming reefs, over the edges of which the current is more rapid and shoal. The difficulty is in getting over the edges of these reefs,—the intermediate parts being deep enough for boats to pass. It is proposed to excavate the rock from these reefs, and open a channel of sufficient width and depth for boats in the river trade; also to widen and improve the natural channel by cutting off the jutting rocks in the short turns of the channel.

Lieut. Lee's estimate was that this improvement could be made for \$350,000. But at the present time it would doubtless cost vastly more. What matter if it costs \$3,000,000 or \$5,000,000? Have we not already seen that the people of these upper Mississippi States are paying twice that sum annually in excessive and oppressive rates of transportation?

It is urged in some quarters that this improvement should be by a canal around the rapids, and not by excavations from the natural channel. But there are obvious reasons in favor of improving the river itself. At no far distant day the commerce of the upper Mississippi will be beyond the capacity of a canal to accommodate. We want the free use of the river *now*. If a canal is constructed, it will be of no advantage to us until entirely completed, which must be a work of several years. If the natural channel is improved, the work can be commenced immediately, and the points offering the greatest obstruction improved first; so that navigation can be materially benefited from the very commencement of the work.

Then we need the river just as soon as free from ice in the spring and until closed by ice in the fall. The last month of navigation is most important for the movement of our products, and that month would be partially lost by the freezing and closing of a canal. Besides we want *free* navigation and no *tolls*.

A canal would require an annual expenditure to keep it in suitable repairs while an improvement of the river channel once made, there would be an end of further expense or anxiety, while the force of the current would each successive year carry forward the work in accordance with nature's practical laws.

A glance at the commerce of the Mississippi will show how necessary it is that this work should be done immediately and effectually. Thirty years ago steam boats engaged in the river trade aggregated but a few score. Now there are over a thousand.

In 1865 the imports of St. Louis, Cincinnati, Louisville, and two or three minor Mississippi towns were of the value of \$730,000,000. As the export trade of these places was about equal to their imports, we have for the entire commerce of these points nearly \$1,500,000,000. But this does not include the commerce of New Orleans, Memphis, Dubuque and other important towns. Include the trade of these points and the aggregate value of the trade of the Mississippi and its tributaries, the Ohio and Missouri, in 1865 was more than *two thousand millions of dollars*, a sum equivalent to three times the whole foreign commerce of the United States. When the Atlantic States want a Harbor improved or Light House erected they ask Congress to undertake the work on the ground of its national importance and common benefits. If the interests of our foreign commerce require it, the general government, without hesitation or complaint appropriates millions for the improvement and call upon the West to sustain its share of the burden. If Congress can improve harbors and build light houses as works of national importance for a foreign commerce of \$600,000,000 a year, ought it to refuse, aye, under what pretext can it refuse to appropriate the paltry sum required for the improvement of the rapids of the Mississippi when asked as an act of justice and relief to the North West and in the interests of a commerce of *more than two thousand millions of dollars?*

What though an uninterrupted navigation of this river should build up St. Louis to the detriment of rival cities. The questions we have met to consider are vital to us all and cannot be narrowed down to local interests and rivalries. Chicago, Cincinnati, or St. Louis must eventually become the great centre of trade for the Mississippi Valley. We want and must have this river made easily navigable without any regard to its ultimate effect upon these rival points. If St. Louis shall distance its competitors in the race and become the controlling commercial centre, it will be because her own energies and the advantages which nature has lavished upon her, entitle her to the position, and all that we shall ask of St. Louis is that she shall use her commanding position and influence in accordance with true commercial honor for the development of the trade and resources, and the general prosperity of the Northwest.

Remove these obstructions and the producers of these States will then have a convenient and adequate outlet to the markets on our own seaboard and of Europe. They can market their grain in London and Liverpool, be successful competitors of European producers on their

own soil, and eventually control the price of bread stuffs in the very center of the world's trade. In Europe land is scarce, and rents ruinously high. The consequence is, that our farmers who have cheap lands and mechanical labor can produce grain with profit, at figures that would ruin the European farmer. The only obstacle that prevents the Western producer from underselling and, by successful competition, driving foreign producers from their own markets, is the want of cheap transportation. For the past five years, the average price per bushel of wheat in London and Liverpool has been \$1.37 in gold, or \$1.90 of our own currency. The English farmer cannot produce it at a less cost with any profit. The land is mostly held by the nobility, who exact as rental therefor *forty per cent.* of the productions. Improve these Rapids, and grain can be sent from Dubuque to New Orleans for 20 cents and thence to Liverpool for 17 cents, including cost of transshipment, thus netting our farmers, at least, one dollar and fifty cents per bushel, and giving them the power to undersell the English farmer in his own market, and eventually compel him to seek other pursuits. Wheat could be shipped from this point to New York for 33 cents per bushel by the way of New Orleans, while the average cost by present transportation from the Mississippi river to New York is 65 cents per bushel. Here is a saving of 32 cents per bushel. This on 30,000,000 of our surplus crop of 50,000,000 bushels annually raised, would make the enormous sum of \$9,600,000. Nor is it unreasonable to suppose that three-fifths of the grain and flour of these States would choose the river route, because with uninterrupted navigation grain will find a better market on the Mississippi than on the Lake, and farmers in the eastern parts of Illinois and Wisconsin will find it to their interest to look westward to the new market thus established.

It is objected that wheat cannot be shipped through the Gulf without injury. The fact is that the United States exports wheat and flour to Portugal, Brazil and Australia and England imports largely from Turkey and Egypt, yet all this commerce is across the tropics through a climate subject to the influences which prevail in the Gulf. Besides, thirty years ago before railroad connections between the East and the West the surplus wheat of the Ohio valley was sent by flatboats to New Orleans and thence by vessel to New York. In this way New Orleans came to enjoy a large export trade in produce. If wheat would bear shipment by that route then, will it not bear shipment by that route now? But it is a notable fact that this fear of wheat or flour spoiling in the Gulf is of Eastern origin. It comes through Chicago. Had the objection any foundation would it be any more disastrous to our producers to have their wheat moisten a little in passing through the Gulf than it now is to have it heat and shrink in passing through the elevators of Chicago.

The project of constructing a canal around Niagara has been under discussion for the last twenty years. Now the best and quickest way to complete that improvement is to remove the obstructions from the Mississippi river. The East with so much of its capital invested in

railroads, canals and steamboat lines engaged in the carrying trade of the Northwest, with so many of its cities and their prosperity dependent largely upon our commerce, cannot afford to lose our trade and the handling of our products. The transportation of our crops to the seaboard they must have. With them it is a necessity. They can hope to retain any considerable share of it only by opening up a continuous and cheap water communication between the Atlantic and Lake Michigan. Capital is sensitive and far-seeing. It readily takes the alarm. Improve the Mississippi, and in five or ten years the interest of the Eastern cities, railroads and capitalists will compel them for their own protection to open up water communication with the Northwest by constructing with their own capital a ship canal around Niagara.

The all absorbing question with the people of this valley to-day is the immediate improvement of the rapids of the Mississippi. Until this vital work is accomplished every other question and project should be held in abeyance. Rest assured it will be bitterly opposed by every conflicting interest. Chicago and Buffalo, the Erie Canal and all the railroads running to the seaboard will combine against us. We must let this project stand upon its own merits and keep it disconnected from every other interest. Its own merits and importance are such that they cannot be argued or ridiculed away. They are of sufficient magnitude to justify, aye, demand, that the general government shall carry it to early and successful completion. What we want is organized, determined effort on the part of the people so deeply interested. We must meet combinations with combinations. We must push this undertaking with all the power of organization and speech and the ballot. Let us display to the country an earnestness that will not abate until success is achieved. Approach Congress in this matter, not as suppliants asking a questionable favor, but as a suffering and determined people seeking only what is manifestly just, necessary, and for the common good. In the palmy days of Rome it was customary in her Senate to attach to every speech and resolution and measure the significant declaration—"Carthage must be destroyed." Let the people of these States imitate the zeal and determination of the Romans and instruct their representatives in the councils of the nation, to insist in every appropriation and declare by all their acts and votes that *the Mississippi river must be improved.*

MR. A. K. NORTHROP addressed the convention upon the necessity of impressing upon the East that the people of the Northwest demand the improvement of our transportation facilities, and that by aiding in these we can supply them with what they need 50 per cent. cheaper than now, and when they have done this they will not refuse. He then offered the following resolution :

*Resolved,* That this Convention hereby tender their thanks to MR. ROBB for his very able and elaborate statistics of the agricultural resources of this country and particularly with reference to the great



Northwest, and that his inferences and conclusions are adopted as the sentiments of the Convention.

MR. NATHAN COLE, of St. Louis, seconded the resolution. The resolution was then passed unanimously.

MR. KINGMAN stated that as the Committee on resolutions would not report to-day, he would move that when the Convention adjourns, it adjourn to meet at 9 o'clock in the morning.

MR. HENDERSON thought it better to meet again this evening. GEN. JONES approved of MR. HENDERSON'S suggestion. Senator STUBBS suggested that other delegates might be on the way and would arrive before morning. Several other gentlemen made remarks upon the question. Upon a vote it was decided to adjourn until Thursday morning at 10 o'clock.

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## PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECOND DAY.

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The Convention was called to order by the President, E. O. STANDARD, of St. Louis, at the hour to which it had been adjourned.

The committee on resolutions not being ready to report, letters were read from prominent gentlemen from abroad. The following from HON. JAMES F. WILSON was read :

WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 5th, 1866.

GENTLEMEN :— Your letter of the 27th ult. inviting me to be present at a mass convention to be held at Dubuque on the 14th inst., to consider the project and to take action as may be deemed advisable to accomplish the improvement of the rapids of the Mississippi river is at hand.

The importance of the improvement of the navigation of the Mississippi to the people of the Northwest cannot be over estimated. Whatever mode of improvement shall be finally adopted, one condition must be attached to it—it must impose no toll or charge on the commerce of the river. Free navigation is what the interests of the Northwest demand. If canals shall be constructed around the rapids,

let them be as free as the rest of the river. Let the Government do the work as a simple act of justice to the great interests to be affected by it, and entail no burden upon them. This, I trust, we shall be able to secure, if it shall be unincumbered by other propositions. The improvement of the navigation of the Mississippi is, I believe, strong enough to stand alone, but may not be able to carry other projects however deserving they may be.

Hoping for the success of the work in which you are engaged, I remain

Yours truly,

JAMES F. WILSON.

P. ROBB,  
GEO. R. WEST,  
A. WILLIAMS,  
H. MARKELL,  
C. C. GILLMAN,

} Committee, Dubuque Iowa.

The following from HON. JOHN A. KASSON was read:

WASHINGTON, Feb. 3, 1866.

GENTLEMEN: My duties here are so constant and so pressing that I cannot with propriety leave them, to accept your invitation. My opinion is clear that in the absence of a continuous communication by direct routes from North to South by rail, it is the manifest duty of the Northwest, and West, to preserve and improve its natural and direct communication by the Mississippi river. Without this channel, we are subjected to the occasional extravagances of Railroad monopolies, and to a limitation upon our choice of markets. As soon as law, order, and civil government are restored in the Southern States touching the great river, I look for a quick and sure advance in the prices of our produce, to the great relief of our farmers, now suffering from its depression. But the advantages of this needed market, it is evident, would be vastly increased, and rendered useful at all seasons, by the improvement of the channel of the Mississippi. From all the information I have been able to obtain, the most effective, the most reliable, and cheapest plan will be to improve the channel itself. But of this your proposed convention will best judge.

I can only assure you, gentlemen, of my cheerful co-operation in the most economical, but at all events effectual plan, to complete the work so nearly finished by nature, of providing a permanent and magnificent commercial route for the vast and increasing trade of the West, between it and Europe, and between its own geographical subdivisions. Congress should resume the work, and finish it.

I am, very truly, gentlemen,

Your friend and obedient servant,

JOHN A. KASSON.

Messrs.

P. ROBB,  
GEO. R. WEST,  
A. WILLIAMS,  
H. MARKELL,  
C. C. GILMAN.

} Committee, &c., Dubuque Iowa.

The following letter from Hon. J. W. GRIMES, was read :

WASHINGTON, Feb. 3, 1866.

GENTLEMEN :—I am just in receipt of your letter of the 27th ult., inviting me to attend a convention to be held in your city on the 14th inst., to take into consideration the subject of the improvement of the navigation of the Mississippi River. My engagements here will preclude the possibility of my attendance.

I need not say to you that I sympathize with you to the fullest extent in all your efforts in this direction, and shall be gratified to do anything in my power to promote this end you have in view.—Permit me to say, that in my opinion, this contemplated improvement has merits enough in itself to entitle it to the consideration of Congress, and that it would be unwise to connect it with any other scheme of improvement.

Your obedient servant,

J. W. GRIMES.

The following letter from Gov. W. R. MARSHALL, of Minnesota, was read :

ST. PAUL, Feb. 1, 1866.

GENTLEMEN :—Your letter of invitation to attend a mass convention at Dubuque, Feb. 14th, to consider the subject, and take action to aid the improvement of the Mississippi rapids, is received. I regret to say that I shall be unable to attend.

The object that you seek to promote has my hearty approval and sympathy. The commerce of this great Valley is continental and national, and the improvement of the rapids that obstruct the great river that floats its commerce is less local in its nature and benefits, than the improvement of Boston or Charleston harbors, by lighthouses &c., at their entrances. Truly the Great West has now a voice potent enough to DEMAND that justice be done us in this matter, at the hands of the National Government.

Thanking you for the invitation,

I am, gentlemen,

Your obedient servant.,

W. R. MARSHALL,

Gov. of Minnesota.

P. ROBB, G. R. WEST and others, Com., Dubuque.

The following letter from Hon. H. PRICE was read :

WASHINGTON CITY, Feb. 7th, 1866.

Messrs. ROBB, WEST, WILLIAMS and others :

GENTLEMEN :—I have received your letter inviting me to be present and "address a Convention of the commercial men of Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois," to be held at Dubuque on the 14th inst. Were it not that my other duties require my entire time and attention, I should be most happy to meet such an assemblage as you designate, for in my opinion no other one subject

is of such vital importance to the commercial and material interests of the entire Northwest, and particularly of the states named in your letter, as the immediate improvement of the great river which forms one of their boundaries. I think it will not be questioned by any one who fairly and thoroughly investigates the subject, that in no other place on this continent can so much benefit be derived to so great an extent of country as in the improvement of the navigation of this great river. The men of the next century who shall occupy our places will be astonished when they are told that a million of men living upon the banks of this majestic stream allowed themselves to be deprived of the benefits of its navigation, except for a very few months of each year, because of an obstruction so insignificant that the cost of running the Government one day in time of war would have given them uninterrupted water carriage without toll or tariff for a greater distance than can be found by river in any other part of the globe, and while men stood idly upon its banks afraid to make the effort necessary to overcome such a comparatively slight obstruction, the continent had been spanned with a band of iron from the Atlantic to the Pacific; that the obstructions presented by the Alleghany and Rocky mountains had been overcome by the untamable spirits of fire and water, bound in an iron harness, guided and controlled by the spirit of progress, whose cry, like that of the fated wanderer, is onward, still onward; and that the cost of forty miles of road in the uninhabitable solitudes of the Rocky Mountains would have given the swarming population of the Mississippi Valley an unobstructed and untaxed highway for thousands of miles.

I sincerely hope that the action of your Convention will have a tendency to awaken the sleeping energies of the people, and demonstrate to the country the fact that in no other place and in no other manner, can so great a commercial good be obtained for the same expenditure of money.

The States bordering on the Mississippi are immensely rich in mineral and agricultural resources. These can only be turned to profitable account by increasing the facilities for getting to and from market, for next to cheap bread cheap transportation is desirable, and what cheap bread is to the toiling millions cheap transportation is to the life of the commercial world. To-day we are in effect at the mercy of the railroad corporations of the country, whose study appears to be to see how much freight the producer will stand rather than allow his grain to rot in his barns, and at this hour farmers on the west bank of our noble river are endeavoring to solve the problem whether coal or corn is the cheapest fuel, and in many instances it is being decided in favor of the latter.

With an uninterrupted navigation of the Mississippi from the Falls of St. Anthony to the Gulf, a healthy competition would spring up between the railroads and the river which would stimulate the production of the country to such an extent that both would have much more to do than either has now.

I am Gentlemen,  
Very Truly Yours,  
H. PRICE.

The following letter from Hon. J. B. GRINNELL was read :

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. }  
Washington, D. C.. Feb. 9, 1865. }

GENTLEMEN :—I have received your invitation to be present and address the Canal Convention to be held at Dubuque. My duties at the Capitol will deny me that pleasure, and will also forbid any elaboration of my views in reference to the great question which calls the earnest men of the Northwest into council.

Let the improvement of our great River be inaugurated by a Bill which shall not be as a tail to any local kite.

Let the work be done early if at all. Provide that the navigation be free. Let the hydraulic power which may be secured be no secondary consideration, for the benefit of manufacturers, and all the cognate interests of our new States, now depressed under the hallucination that it is the mission of our farmers to raise grain for Europe. That wheat market was not the last year worth as much to our country as that of the city of Washington during one session of Congress.

Our present want is cheap and competing outlets and diversified industry, which will cheapen our exchange of products, and bring us population, which is strength.

It will be my pleasure to be instructed by your deliberations, and to conform my vote if possible, to the intelligent connection of my colleagues, Messrs. Price and Allison, who have homes on the Mississippi

I am sirs,

Your Obedient Servant,  
J. B. GRINNELL.

The following letter from Hon. E. B. WASHBURNE was read :

WASHINGTON JAN. 31, 1866.

GENTLEMEN :—I have duly received your letter of the 27th instant, inviting me to attend a mass convention in your city on the 14th proximo to consider the subject of the improvement of the rapids of the Mississippi river. I wish it were possible for me to be present, but my duties here will prevent it. The people of the valley of the Mississippi river have not become too soon aroused to the great question of obtaining cheaper transit for their products by means of the great natural water communications. The oppressions and extortions of the gigantic railroad monopolies of the Northwest are operating to destroy the great interests of our people. The substance of the farmer in being eaten out by the enormous and unconscionable charges he has to pay to the railroads for the transportation of his products to a market. Heartless, unrelenting, and without souls, all appeals to these monopolies to modify and reduce their rates of either freight or passage are unheeded or met with defiance. As one of the remedies against this state of things we must have increased facilities through other channels of communication. In other words we must improve the navigation of our magnifi-

cent old Mississippi to that extent that the rapids shall be no material obstruction to navigation. Rock River must also be improved so that the wealth of that unrivalled valley may float unvexed into the lap of the Father of waters. I am asking a just and liberal appropriation from Congress for both of these objects, and I hope Congress will pass a bill to that effect before it adjourns.

I am rejoiced to know of your movement in this matter. It is well that the people themselves should take a resolute hold on these questions so vitally affecting their interests. When they speak with a united voice in the cause of justice and right, that voice must and shall be respected.

Hoping to hear from you the result of your deliberations, I am,

Very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,

E. B. WASHBURN.

MESSRS. P. ROBB, G. R. WEST, and others, Committee.

The following from HON. WM. B. ALLISON was read :

WASHINGTON, Feb. 3. 1866.

GENTLEMEN:—Your favor inviting me to be present at a public meeting to be held at Dubuque on the 14th instant, to consider the question of improving the rapids of the Mississippi river is received. Thanking you for this invitation, I must decline because of duties here. I need scarcely add that I feel a deep interest in this subject.

The rapids MUST BE IMPROVED and soon, to save us from being crushed out and destroyed, by onerous burdens imposed upon the products of our industry in its transit to market.

The river should be so improved as to make navigation both free and uninterrupted. I think the time has come when we have a right to DEMAND this of the nation, and for your encouragement I will say that there is a growing disposition among members to yield to this just demand. I can only say that whatever effort I can exert here, shall be used in that direction.

If, however, we cannot just now secure such legislative action as we all desire, we must adopt the best attainable measure, that will at once blow out the rocks that impede the navigation, or that will enable vessels without delay to travel by them and trust to a future Congress to correct temporary evils.

I hope your deliberations may secure such harmony of action and purpose as will speedily accomplish the object you have in view.

I am, gentlemen,

Respectfully your ob't. serv't.,

WM. B. ALLISON.

P. ROBB,	} Committee, &c., Dubuque Iowa.
H. MARKELL,	
G. R. WEST,	
A. WILLIAMS,	
O. C. GILMAN.	

A letter from A. A. TERELL, of Sterling, Illinois, was read, strongly endorsing the objects of the Convention.

The following letter from GEN. SAMUEL R. CURTIS was then read :

WASHINGTON, Feb. 7, 1866.

GENTLEMEN :— Your communication of the 26th instant is duly received. You invite me to be present at a convention called at Dubuque on the 14th instant, to consider the matter of improving the rapids of the Mississippi.

The subject has interested me for years, and I have earnestly and often sought occasion to urge it upon the public consideration. But erroneous ideas of what was being done, and admiration of railroad lines that will not supersede the necessity of river improvements have lulled the public into indifference upon a subject of the greatest importance to the Northwest. The rapids can be, *and should be* so improved as to pass boats at all hours and with entire safety without twenty minutes delay, and without expense or danger. It may cost for both rapids three or four millions ; but the value of the water-power will reimburse the builder. The Government should do the work and save the people of Iowa and Minnesota from wasting this sum annually in needless expense of transportation.

I regret that other engagements prevent the possibility of my being present at your convention. I wrote out my views at some length in reply to enquiries made by your representative Mr. Wilson. I hope you may act harmoniously and advisedly on the subject, for it is one that greatly concerns the country, and correct ideas have not heretofore prevailed upon the subject. The rapids are not obstacles standing erect and easily removed. They are solid inclined planes, as immovable as the whole bed of the river. Your blasting operations may make the fissures a little straighter, but that will make them rougher, while the fall—the inclined plane—is still there, little less inclined, and just as much a fall as before. The St. Lawrence the Muskingum, the Kentucky and many rivers in Europe have been improved on a modern and unquestionable mode. The rapids of the Ohio are being improved. You have only to unite on similar plans and either government or private capital will carry it out. The objection to private capital is that tolls will be demanded. But excessive tolls would not be a tithe of what is now paid in the way of delay, damage, insurance, transfers and transportation, over and around the rapids.

I will cordially co-operate with you in efforts to press this matter upon the country and upon Congress ; and I sincerely hope that success may crown our efforts, and secure to our

States west of the Mississippi the full advantage of navigation which is easily obtained from our great national highway.

I have the honor to be, gentlemen,  
Your obedient servant,

S. R. CURTIS, Maj. Gen.

Messrs.

P. ROBB.  
G. R. WEST,  
A. WILLIAMS,  
H. MARKELL,  
C. C. GILMAN,

} Committee, &c., Dubuque, Iowa.

GEN. H. A. WILTSE being called for, proceeded to address the Convention, as follows :

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am anxious, in common with the citizens of Dubuque, in attendance upon this Convention, to hear from the members of our Legislature, and gentlemen in attendance upon this Convention from St. Louis and other cities and towns both beyond and within the limits of our own State. This anxiety will abridge the remarks that it might otherwise be proper for me to make.

And, first, let me assure the chairman of the Convention that no part of the attachment which he, as a citizen of St. Louis, expressed for Iowa, yesterday, is lost. It is fully and heartily reciprocated by the people of Iowa. St. Louis is our natural as she is our ancient friend. Her interests are locked up with those of Iowa. We are united to her by a bond as sensitive and inseparable as that which unite the Siamese Twins. The policy and interest of Chicago look to the absorption of our river cities, while it is the aim and interest of St. Louis to foster and build up our cities, because upon their success depends her greatness.

The first white child born in Ohio is a citizen of Zanesville in that State, and slightly past the scriptural age of three score and ten. In the lifetime of this one man the nine States, immediately interested in the purpose which assembled this Convention, have arisen and taken their places in the Union. Within that period Ohio, Indiana, Missouri, Illinois, Michigan, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Kansas have recorded their stars upon our national banner. The history of these States, in a commercial view, might be divided into twenty-five to thirty years of exploration and Indian wars, twenty-five years of immigration, in which all the products of the country were barely sufficient to feed the people, and twenty years of faith in which there was an increasing surplus of productions. I call it the period of faith, because of the constant trust on the part of producers that relief was at hand through the agency of projected railroads. The railroads have come, but relief has not come with them. They will transport the products if the producer will give them the products for carrying to market. These States are now entering upon the period of despair. The New England and Middle State are paying exorbitant



prices for produce which the people of these Central States, cultivating the most fertile and easily worked soil upon the earth cannot be paid day-laborer's wages for raising. It is time, if not for despair, certainly, for alarm.

Look at the five of these States more immediately interested in the question engrossing the attention of this convention—at Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa. They are midway between the ocean on the east and the mountains on the west, and as far from New York, where the books of the nation are kept, as from the Gulf of Mexico. These five states are the granaries, the farm and the garden of the Union. As we see, by the statistics ably presented yesterday by Mr. Robb, these States are producing half the wheat and half the corn produced by this nation—half of all the corn and half of all the wheat produced by all the States and Territories of one of the first powers and the great producing power of the earth. The question of cheap and rapid facilities for marketing products so enormous in quantity, is necessarily the controlling question for the people of these States. With proper facilities they must enjoy unbounded prosperity and wealth, and without such facilities they may be and remain in penury.

There are railroads leading through these States and the States intervening these and the seaboard that form continuous lines. These roads exist by virtue of charters granted by the several States through which they pass. As a rule they are owned by persons who had no part in projecting or building them, but who have acquired title generally through a foreclosure sale, at a sum much less than the property cost. These owners are unknown and inaccessible to the people, deaf to their complaints and blind to their sufferings. They are moneyed men beyond the reach of any argument or influence but that of making out of these roads the last cent possible, at the present moment. As the business increases they reverse the established rules of trade, by increasing the tariff. The more their net earnings the higher they make the tariffs, regretting, if at all, that a higher rate had not been earlier adopted. Like the barons of the middle ages they levy toll upon all the travellers of business and pleasure, and just such toll as their necessities or greed may dictate. It is said that there is no remedy for these extortions but the remedy of competition. This is certainly a remote and insecure remedy, because these monopolies have the disposition and will at their present rate of profits too soon have the ability to buy up any competing work you may open. If Congress has not the power to put a stop to this systematic oppression, then was the constitution of the United States very carelessly worded. Certainly Congress must have concluded that it possessed this power, for it has twice, certainly, exercised it upon kindred questions, while Chief Justice Marshall and Justices Story, McLean and Grier, in delivering the opinion of the court of last resort in the land, have recognized this power as residing in Congress. And was there not a more auspicious remedy afforded by the object which the assembling of this convention has in view, it would be, in my judgement the duty of this convention, and of the press and people to thunder at the doors

of Congress until its power "to regulate the commerce among the several States" had been exercised in their behalf. But the Mississippi river is a cheaper and more natural route for the surplus products of these States.

Mr. Hale of Mills county, in his remarks yesterday, truthfully termed our river the ocean of the Central States. It is in every commercial sense, an ocean. Take the Atlantic seaboard, and double it upon itself, leaving a mile of navigable waters passing between instead of along the present seaboard of cities, and were this channel obstructed by rocks, how would not Congress have been hammered at, and appropriations made, and the rocks chiseled and blasted and gouged, until they would long ago have disappeared. And so would the two chains of rocks in our ocean river have disappeared, had they been more formidable than they are, or had they lain in the track of the salt water commerce which has long had almost unasked and always lavished favors at the hands of Congress.

Let us turn for a moment from the five States we have been considering, and look at the interests of the people immediately interested in the purpose of this convention; for you of Missouri are below both chains of rapids, and have only an interest in this question which is shared by the people of the Union at large.

Half of Illinois, too, is below the Rapids, and another quarter of that State and perhaps half of the State of Wisconsin have the advantage of lake and canal transportation eastward. But the people of Iowa, Minnesota, half of Wisconsin and a fourth of Illinois, embracing 2,000,000 of people, have a direct, equal and lasting interest in the question. The surplus corn product of these 2,000,000 of people for 1865 reached 100,000,000 bushels, with an amount equal in value of other surplus products. The loss to this 2,000,000 on their surplus products of a single year, by the want of the route to market which Congress will be asked to complete, is a sum so great that the tax upon it—the municipal, county, state and federal tax—would accomplish all and perfect all that this convention will have the courage to ask. These facts need only be presented to have their importance recognized. They concern not only the intelligent, enterprising and deserving millions, but they concern the producers of the wheat and the corn of this nation and equally the consumers of those products throughout the land. A question is, shall the earnings of these millions of people be enjoyed by themselves or be swallowed by monopolizing corporations?

The river is our natural outlet to the ocean. It is the highway hewed out for us through hills and rocks for the commerce of this country. To make one like it would require all the wealth of the world and be a work of ages.

A request so reasonable, and that effects the commerce, the wealth and prosperity of the people who furnished one-sixth of that mighty army of 2,600,000 men, and who by their surplus products contributed so largely to sustain the credit of the nation abroad during a severe and protracted war, should not be denied. It is not a favor

they ask for themselves alone, but it is an act of justice, the benefits of which will be felt in the remotest home in the land.

MR. COLE, of St. Louis, said that Dubuque and St. Louis are not strangers. There are friendships in trade. St. Louis remembers the days of yore, when Dubuque loaded her boats with the products of Iowa and sent them to St. Louis. St. Louis is not interested, as is Dubuque, in the removal of the obstructions of the river, because she is below them; but she has the interest that is national in their removal. God made the river—man made the railroads, and we must struggle to improve the former. We of the Northwest, who have opened the river against armed men, are not to be dismayed by a few rocks. During the past year we have paid nearly the value of produce for its transportation.

MR. FAGIN, Chairman of the Committee on Resolutions, announced that the Committee was ready to report, and had instructed one of the members, Hon. B. B. RICHARDS, of Dubuque to report the resolutions.

MR. RICHARDS, then read the following report and resolutions :

We, the citizens of the States of Missouri, Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin, in convention assembled, under a solemn sense of our duty to the people of those States, and with the view to promote their interest and the interest of the whole nation, of which they form a part, make, publish and declare the following resolves :

The region we occupy is, for agriculture, the finest on the globe. The soil is very fertile, the climate healthy, the people industrious, persevering and full of resources, a general failure of crops has never been known, and light labor brings large returns. It should be the land where wealth most rapidly accumulates—the paradise of the farmer—and yet in this land “farming does not pay.” Many of the great staples are nearly valueless, and never before in the history of the country did the fruit of the laborer purchase for him so little comfort. Corn in many places is used for fuel, oats in the stack rot unthreshed, barley and rye “cannot be moved,” and wheat, except of the first quality, leaves no margin to the producer.

If animal products form an exception, it is only because of the scarcity war has made and their price will soon reach the low level of the cereals. In all this there is a great want, a sore need, and if no remedy can be found, production in this region must diminish, and the strongest arm of the nation must wither. But one means of relief can be afforded, which is to provide cheaper transportation to the markets of the world for our heavy products. To reach this

end many projects are suggested, but among them all, the first in importance, the cheapest, most practicable, efficient and speedy is the improvement of the navigation of the Upper and Lower Rapids of the Mississippi River.

The proper agent to effect this improvement is the Federal Government. The work is peculiarly a national one, and twice heretofore has the nation undertaken its accomplishment. Ten States are directly interested in the work, and ALL indirectly. Five hundred thousand precious lives, and four thousand millions of treasure were not thought too large a price to pay for the freedom of that river—surely none will now cavil about the small sum necessary to garner the full fruit of that great purchase—to assume the free navigation of the noble stream. To fetter it with exacting monopolies, to vex it with tolls, would be a fatal mistake—a national disgrace.

The good results to flow from the successful accomplishment of this great purpose can hardly be enumerated. They are as multiplied as the industries of the nation and as huge as its other wonderful resources. Even now in the infancy of our production, it would save to our people tens of millions of dollars annually in freights. It would make good markets for our heavy products, stimulate production, invite immigration, touch with new life the whole Northwest. It would make labor in the west profitable, and food in the east cheap. It would bless both. The whole labor of the cotton districts of the South could then be devoted to the production of that great staple, and the Northwest could supply that labor with corn and wheat and bacon. The gold of the world would thus be put under contribution to pay for that cotton, and every branch of industry in the nation would share in that gold. If transportation is difficult and expensive, the cotton planter will raise corn; if transportation is easy and cheap, he will raise cotton only and buy corn. In this way cotton production would be doubled, the national revenue be proportionately increased, the national credit be assured, and the national union be truly restored. These results, based upon the census of to-day, are vastly disproportionate to the expenditure required to secure them. We forbear to state (this work accomplished) what they will be in the near future. From these premises we deduce the following conclusions and resolves:

1st. That justice to the people of the Northwest and true economy in the administration of the national finances demand that the Federal Government immediately make sufficient appropriation to secure the improvement of the Upper and Lower Rapids of the Mississippi River.

2d. That the mode of improvement should be left to competent engineers of the Government, but the navigable channel should not be less than 300 feet in width, and should not have, at any season, less than four feet of water, and this channel, whatever it be, should not be subject to any toll or charge whatever. The commerce of our great river should be as free as that of the lakes or the ocean.

That while commerce should be free, and all means and lines of

intercommunication should be encouraged, and the rights of each respected, we still regard the free navigation of our principal rivers as an object of permanent importance, and no bridges that seriously obstruct or endanger such navigation should be constructed or allowed to stand after erection. The people of the Mississippi Valley desire, and have a right to demand, that neither monopoly, bridge or rapids shall stand in the way of a free transit to the Gulf.

That we look with pride upon the railway lines of our country—that they are monuments, of energy, genius and power, worth the ambition of any potentate or nation. Being chiefly the unaided result of individual enterprise, they illustrate our national character and challenge our highest admiration. They are essential to the development of our national resources, and we would protect them in all their rights and encourage them by stable legislation and liberal dealing that they may be extended to regions yet remote, and we would honor the men associated with their success. Nevertheless, the people are higher in right and power than all companies, associations and monopolies—and that doctrine is monstrous that regards the creature of the State as superior to the sovereign power thereof.

Whenever any companies or associations, for selfish aims, consolidate or confederate together to oppress the people they defeat the object of their creation, and forfeit our regard, if they do not lose their rights. In discriminating in favor of certain lines of communication, elevators or cities, they are guilty of such oppression. Railways should bless, not curse, the land. They should be the servants, not the masters, of the people. Their own true interests are consistent with this, for no permanent prosperity in this country can rest upon monopoly and injustice. The railways west of the Mississippi, we warn them in all kindness, must not discriminate against the rivers as a channel of communication. Let them ponder the words of Solomon : "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth. There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

Hon. H. C. HENDERSON, being called upon, addressed the Convention in favor of the report. He said :

"If we were here only for our own interest or that of a generation, it would be comparatively insignificant, but we are here for the interest of all time and all generations. It is not what effect our action will have upon the city of St. Louis or on other cities, that we must consider. We must take a broader view, and consider the influence of our action on the Republic, aye, and broader than that, the influence of our action on the world.

When thirty years ago I stood on the bluffs of this beautiful river, though not then able to comprehend the future of Iowa, such ideas as I did have of the growth of the Northwest shaped the course of my life. The productions were then insufficient to support the population. Tawny Indians occupied the prairies and forests. The few whites lived miles apart. Now Iowa has nearly 1,000,000 inhabitants,

and yet the State is still in its infancy. It is shown that only 4,000,000 of acres of land are in cultivation, and that the quantity is known to be not tilled half as well as it should be. The agricultural capacity of Iowa, when the land is cultivated to the extent it is in some other States, is sufficient to feed half the population of the Republic. The loose manner in which agriculture is carried on in Iowa at present, warrants the assertion that a better system would result in twenty-five times the present products. The same may be said of all the great States forming the Mississippi Valley.

In the contemplation of questions before the Convention we must consider future wants. We can only approximate these by means of the light of experience.

There seems to be a diversity of opinion as to the means of securing the improvement of the river now desired. I would not do anything to embarrass appropriations by Congress. But safeguards should be thrown around them sufficient to insure the object for which they will be made.

I desire to say that I cannot believe it benefit to much extent the people of the Northwest to build a canal around the Rapids. Many years ago when I was at St. Louis it was a wonder that twenty-one boats arrived in a day—now it is sometimes hundreds.

The canal at Louisville was considered a great work, and it did some good, but I apprehend that a canal at the rapids, to accommodate our prospective commerce, would have to be as large as the river itself. The Almighty made the river for our use; we had better carry out his design.

The Louisville canal was always insufficient. A canal around the rapids of the Mississippi river must be of a capacity equal to that of the river. Puny man must not think to confine within narrow limits the flood of waters poured down from the North by the Almighty. Such a canal as is needed cannot now be had. The appropriations would necessarily be too large. Besides it would require an army of lock tenders and toll-gatherers, and though it would furnish sinecures to those incompetent to gain a livelihood, the vast expense would be too great a burden for this small advantage. We want the improvement of the rapids without unnecessary burdens.

It has been suggested that the water power of the proposed canal should belong to the Government. Well, I trust the Government is not going into the milling business. The water rents would not pay the agents for collecting them. Besides we would have a tempest in a teapot every year in some controversy about water rights.

A canal can never accommodate the commerce of the river, wherein hundreds and thousands of vessels shall pass in the great trade between St. Paul and New Orleans. Let me tell those who favor a canal that they underestimate the future of the people interested. This Northwest is to surpass in its productions and commerce all the rest of the Union. There are those now living who shall see the population of the Mississippi Valley equaling the present population of the United States. When that time comes who can estimate the

wants of the people? It is said that the railroads will oppose the project. Men never look to the future without blending the present with it. If the railroads could be brought to look to the true interests of the country, and of all, in the future, they would not oppose the project. The result of the improvement would pour a vast population into the country. The time is in the near future when all our facilities will not be sufficient for our wants. The railroads now insufficient will then be impotent to aid us. Now when our agricultural production shall be increased—when a greater population occupies this fertile land—when increased facilities are had, there will be no real rivalry between the railroads and the river. The roads will have all they can do, and more will be needed.

The progress that will result from facilitating commerce will develop every interest of the country. The time is coming when railroads will get rid of old foggy ideas, and will voluntarily reduce their rates. When it was proposed to reduce postal rates some said that mail service would be a dead weight on that department. When reduced from 10 to 3 cents, it was found that the revenue was actually increased. Everybody then would write letters and this made it a source of revenue to the government. Do a large business on small profits and make money is the motto, and the people are learning it. Let the railroads do a large business on cheap rates, and they will make more money than by a small business on high rates. There may be some reason for the present rates. But our railroad men will in time learn that they can make money by reducing rates on the principles that reduce postage. The majority of people have to count their expenses—more would travel for business or pleasure who never think of going from home. If rates were cheap more people would travel, and many would learn by observation how to live—they would become, by association, more intelligent and thus be the better and more useful. Eventually a wise policy will be adopted by railroad companies, and if in no other way they must be taught it by rivalry.

The effect of the improvement of navigable streams on railroads is not to destroy the latter. It attracts business to such lines as compete with navigation, and increases it by competition. On the Hudson river the boats are as numerous, and the railroad profits are as great, as before competition. Business has increased to both. So along the shore of Lake Erie, the railroad profits are increased by the increased business brought by competing navigation. There was a project to build a railroad from Dubuque to Keokuk. The time will come when there will be a railroad all the way on the bank of the river. Improve the Rapids, and the railroads would be sure to be built. I believe the time will come when there will be a line of railroad on each side of all our large rivers. Rivalry and competition will develop energy and progress, and we must take a prosperous future into consideration, and make our calculations for the future commerce accordingly. Hence we want the whole river for navigation. The foundation of this improvement must be solid, aye, on rock. Let commerce find its way uninterrupted to the Gulf. Let us have no

half-way measures, no compromises, but what we have a right to demand, and what it is the duty of the Government to grant to us. If we cannot do better, we will make a small beginning, but such as we can enlarge in the future. We must begin right, that we may not be defeated when we are able to make all the improvements we need.

He said he had spoken reluctantly, and given his own views, but had consented to speak because of the importance of the subject.

The question before us is the most important now before the General Government. When we know that the very interest on the revenue tax paid by the people who demand the improvement of the rapids, will accomplish the improvement, we must demand that the work shall be done and be done now.

He thought the surveys already made would be sufficient on that subject. All the engineers agree on the same plan of improving the natural channel of the river, and while he thanked the convention for listening to him, he trusted that the great work in view would be speedily accomplished. We must not lose sight of the necessity of taking such action as will secure an improvement which shall not be a "one horse affair" alongside of the river. This is the main thing, and must be kept in view.

COL. LEAKE, of Davenport, was called to the stand, and said he would have preferred to listen to delegates from abroad. Iowa has made up its mind on the subject. Iowa is bound in affection to Missouri. Iowa soldiers can furnish sectional maps of that State. We are bound to her people by ties of blood, and we only want the bond of commerce to be added to our ties. He thought the chains of rocks across the river are merely dams that may be removed. But he favored the resolution which provided for a board of able engineers to determine the best method of doing the work. He gave some illustrations of his views on such improvements.

SUEL FOSTER, of Muscatine, stated that he came to the convention instructed to ask that the natural channel be selected for improvement, and above all things that it be free from toll.

J. P. MANNY, of Rockford, Ill., stated that he thought what was needed was to get the bill for the improvement of the river right, and then force it to a vote. He thought then there would be found but few to vote against it. The members from Illinois would not oppose the improvement he was sure.

On motion, the Convention adjourned until half-past 1 o'clock P. M.



## AFTERNOON SESSION.

Convention was called to order by the President.

Maj. FLOYD of Keokuk said that there was one thing which did not seem to be thoroughly understood, and that is that the question of cost should not enter into the consideration of the improvement. He had the honor to be employed in execution of excavations of the Rapids in 1852, when \$100,000 was appropriated. The work was let on contract at \$5.80 per cubic yard. The next year a contract was let for \$9 per cubic yard—the original contract was \$10 per yard, by blasting. But it cost by that process one season, \$37 per yard. But he (Maj. Floyd), devised machinery that did the work for less than \$10 per yard. He said it would cost less than \$2,000,000 to make the channel four feet deep and 200 feet wide. The canal project originates from a chartered Company of which Gen. Samuel R. Curtis is President.

A contract could be let at any time to clear out the channel with certainty to the depth and width named within the cost of the proposed appropriation. He said there was no danger of drawing off the water from above the Rapids by improving the natural channel.

The same kind of machinery that was used when the last \$50,000 was expended would do the whole work with success. Complete machinery would cost \$100,000, and would then take up rapidly the thin layers of the rock that form the reefs which at intervals obstruct the navigation. He knew men who would take the contract at the last and low estimates made for the work. He considered the excavation at the points of obstructed navigation the only practical plan.

Hon. B. B. Richards, being called upon, addressed the Convention as follows:

I rejoice at the proceedings and circumstances of this day. Delegates from five States, and from the city of St. Louis are here. The General Assembly has adjourned to meet us and is here. All favor none oppose the subject we have in hand.

In all this there is an omen of good for the future, and being ever sanguine, I think I see the good time coming that I dreamed of long ago.

When thirteen years ago I first saw Dubuque, I looked over its geography, and said, when this fair plain at the west is occupied, here on the right bank of the Mississippi, will the exchanges be made, and here will arise a city of 100,000 people. I feel to-day that the dream is yet to be realized. On this noble river cities will yet arise—not one or two, but half a dozen cities, with populations averaging from

100,000 to 500,000 people. During the past eight or nine years there has been the stagnation following the crash, the completion of railroad lines from the east, all followed by the war that closed the Mississippi, and it began to look as though we were but an outlying province of Chicago, and all we had was to be measured by its distance from Chicago.

The strongest river men began to think we must learn pastoral life and resign ourselves to our fate, and allow our river to dwindle to insignificance. The aspect of affairs is now happily changed, and we promise to follow with our commerce our great river to the Gulf. Before the war, St. Louis did not export a single bushel of grain southward, in bulk, and as a consequence the market was easily glutted. Now all is changed. One elevator of 1,250,000 bushels' capacity at St. Louis, lines of boats and barges for cheap transport south, floating elevators at New Orleans, and vessels towing this freight to all the world, make a picture calculated to gladden the hearts of the farmers of Iowa. The promise is that grain will go to Liverpool for 30 cents per bushel. Let improvements continue; let this commerce increase; let these Rapids be improved; let 100,000,000 bushels be exported by way of this river, and the price here will be better one day and year with another than it is in Chicago. Then will Iowa farmers be in as good a situation as Illinois farmers—nay, Illinois farmers will desire to change with us even.

Chicago papers tell us sagely that we must address ourselves to raising stock, that we are too far off to raise corn, barley and wheat for export.

We tell Chicago—and we love and honor Chicago—her enterprise, her intelligence, her activity and thrift we admire. She is a wonder, an American wonder; but we tell her not to put on airs to her sister State. Iowa must have a State policy. We must magnify our rivers and their commerce. We must improve the good gifts that our Father has given us. We must have a policy. Our railroads must be operated as Iowa railroads, and they must not discriminate against the Mississippi as a channel of commerce. Let Illinois thrive. Let Chicago rise, we care not how high, but not by appropriating the fruit of our toil. Let her look out for Chicago. We will try to look out for Iowa.

This State policy will, in the long run, be the best for all Iowa railroads. Let our farmers have cheap transit on the river, and the railroads across our State will be busy in carrying freight to the river. But if they insist in discriminating against the Mississippi, and forcing freight to Chicago, then soon a north and south road will cut their running to St. Louis, and their Chicago freights are gone.

To show that this work is eminently national and economical, it is only necessary to refer to the history of cotton for the last few years. We supplied the European markets with the best and almost with all their cotton before the war. Disliking to depend on us, they attempted to stimulate its culture abroad in South America, Egypt, and India. Under the high prices made by our war, they succeeded in getting

chiefly from Egypt and India about half a supply of poor cotton. But to do this a famine was produced in India, and the Pasha of Egypt issued a royal decree to narrow the breadth of cotton planting for fear of famine. How manifestly it appears that we alone can raise good cotton in abundance, and corn enough to feed those who plant cotton. The Revenue Commission estimate \$40,000,000 from an export duty of five cents on cotton.

Give the cotton-growers corn, and bacon, and flour cheaper than they can raise them, and you will increase, perhaps double, the cotton produced. Then we have \$80,000,000 revenue from cotton! How would this assure our credit and enable us to carry our debt as a boy would toss a ball. How clear is the duty of Congress to marry the cotton to the corn by making clear this royal river that binds them together. It is good economy to make this improvement.

Could I get the ear of MR. McCULLOCH, I would advise him to recommend the work as an economical finance measure. Let us not think that we are to have a smooth path to all this. There are interests strong, cunning and bold that will oppose us. We must meet craft and open war. It is not in human nature that elevator men in Chicago, railroad men, propeller on the lakes, indeed of the men of capital from here to the Atlantic, should favor this project. Their ambition, their expectation is to draw all to them from the Rocky Mountains. They pray that the Mississippi may dry up, especially that part above St. Louis.

If, indeed, all men are willing to do justice and give us this needed work, then all is well, and our fears will not hurt us. If we have enemies in our path, we are wiser and better for being forewarned.

GEN. VANDEVER says we must be harmonious in the Northwest or our measure will be lost. Indeed this looks as though there was some opposition. But the people must make up in zeal what Congress lacks in justice. Let farmers hold meetings. Let the whole country blaze with river improvement and our Congressmen will get backbone enough to ask, yea, to demand justice.

I ventured the remark recently in the State Senate that I would rather have one Ben Wade full of fire and unconquerable determination to carry any measure than a whole regiment of amiable men that would yield to the first fierce storm.

It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the exceeding liberality and kindness of the D. & S. C. R. R. company in sending a special train to Cedar Rapids to bring the members of the General Assembly here. I am most glad also to give my most hearty thanks to the members of the Produce Exchange for their intelligence and zeal in this great work and their well ordered and hospitable attention to the members of the General Assembly.

Hon. F. E. Bissell was called to the stand. He spoke not as an official but as a private individual. "The great desideratum of individuals, cities, States and nations is independence. How will one accomplish this. By three pursuits men obtain livelihoods, agriculture, manufactures and commerce. We are said to be an agricultural people,

that is to say that we are always to be poor, for wealth centres in manufactures and commerce. These determine prices. The first means by which the farmer can fix the price of his products is to bring the commercial man and the manufacturer to his door. It may be done by increasing the facilities of transportation which has the same effect. If wheat could be sent free of expense to New York, the price could be put down in New York. But the more railroads are constructed and water communications are opened the less will be the price of the manufactured articles brought to the farmers. By this means the agriculturalist is benefited just in proportion as rival transit lines cheapen freights both on the exports and imports for any town or community. We used to measure distance by miles when we travelled in wagons, now we measure distance by railroads as so many hours. By facility of transportation we cheapen everything we wish to buy, and this is the benefit we receive in exchange for our products or their equivalent for all the goods we want. The population of the agricultural portions of New York has decreased. Not so in Pennsylvania, where the towns are manufacturing. Farmers there find a market at their doors. They can live on small farms, and are not compelled to move out west. We want to introduce manufacturing establishments here. We ship tons of wood each year from the East in implements. We want to manufacture them here. The question before us is how to open communication by the river so as to bring these facilities to us. Engineers have reported favorably on the improvement of the river. So have steamboat men, and all agree that the best way is to deepen the channel.

Speed, and economy in the transportation of all of our products would be the result of improving the Rapids. All parties, whether engineers or steamboat men, all men except, perhaps, some interested parties, agree that the natural channel can be practically improved. He favored the plan of leaving the method of the work to a Board of Engineers.

A State cannot do the work—it must be authorized by Congress. The whole country is interested in the work. The Eastern States want our products and desire to get them as cheap as they can. We want their manufactures. Hence they should favor our object in securing cheap transportation.

The only objection is said to be that the Nation is in debt and must not expend money for such a purpose. But will any man say that the work would not benefit the commerce of the country, and if so would not the result aid the Government in paying the public debt. Just as a bankrupt often retrieves his fortunes and pays his debts by being permitted to use money to make the more money. Congress is the exponent of the will of the people, and if we express our desire as a demand, Congress must pass the law which we require. It is not the sentiment of Dubuque alone that is here expressed, but of the people from St. Paul down. These meetings are required. The subject has lain dormant for years because other means of communication than the river were opened up answering our wants, without expense to

the Government. Now it is impossible for them to do so. Railroads cannot carry one-half our freights when we want it. These meetings are called to express public opinion. This is the object of the resolutions. He does not like "pitching into" railroads. They are good things for us, and do no more in raising prices of freight than other transportation companies would do when independent. Railroads have been bankrupted frequently by low freights caused by competition. There is but one way to make them reduce freight charges, and that is to build another and competing line. It is free to all. Anybody can build railroads, and it will be done when it is profitable. By clearing the rapids of the river we establish a competing line. This question of freights has been discussed in the New York Legislature frequently. The result is, that competing lines there charge but little more for freight from the West to New York than they do from within the borders of that State. It is the result of competition with Pennsylvania lines of roads.

The New York Legislature proposed to compel railroads to have a pro rata tariff, but the railroad men said you will break up our roads, for we cannot carry local freight at the price for through freights. If we did we could not pay expenses. And we shall be obliged to charge higher rates for western freight, and that would drive away our trade, for it would drive that freight through Pennsylvania to Philadelphia, and be an injury to New York. That was reasonable and true.

Now, I think that there is too much intimated against railroads in the resolutions. We should have, on the subject before us, but one idea, and express it and act upon it—improve the Rapids. We should act on the suggestion made by Mr. Robb yesterday, and imitate the Romans when under all circumstances there was added to every declaration, "Carthage must be destroyed." So should we on this say and act in earnest on the single idea that the Rapids must be improved.

MR. RICHARDS explained that the resolutions did not attack railroads except as they strove to prevent the improvement of the navigation of the river in order to cut off competition.

A. W. FAGIN, President of the St. Louis Grain Elevator, said that he came to fraternize with the people of Iowa, and that he had many pleasant recollections of trade associations of the upper Mississippi. He had been engaged in business for a long time, and had passed from wagons to railroads and telegraphs, and why should we not advance to improvements in navigation? The cost of the proposed improvement was insignificant when compared with its benefits and the number of those whom it would benefit. He believed in making the improvement large enough to take all the produce it might be desired to send to the Gulf. Those who wished to go elsewhere should be permitted to do so. In every case people should be allowed to choose

their own routes. He was not opposed to railroads crossing the river, but he was opposed to their obstructing the river. He remembered the first bushel of barley grown in the State of Iowa, having furnished the seed and purchased the product. He remembered Iowa soldiers gratefully.

MR. T. G. CONANT, of St. Louis, thought further argument unnecessary, but he would assure the Convention that the members of Congress from Missouri would not be found wanting when this measure comes before Congress, nor will the people of that State be found wanting to sustain their representatives.

The question being called on the adoption of the resolutions, they were unanimously adopted amid great enthusiasm, every delegate rising to his feet.

MR. STANARD returned thanks to the people of Dubuque and the Produce Exchange for the hearty welcome the delegations to the Convention had received, and to the Iowa Legislature for the interest taken by its members in the great objects of the Convention. He thought that all that was now necessary to secure these objects was a persistent effort such as was here being made. Certainly the benefits to be derived were worthy of all effort. It was a matter of life and death with the Northwest, and should be so considered.

MR. KINGMAN moved a vote of thanks to the Iowa Legislature for their attendance at the Convention, and MR. T. H. BOWEN moved the adoption of the following as an amendment, and it was passed unanimously:

*Resolved*, That we heartily sanction the proposed action of the Legislature of Iowa in appointing a commission to lay the subject of the Mississippi improvement before Congress, and to push the same to a final success.

On motion the Convention then adjourned *sine die*.

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## ERRATA.

On Page 17, sixth line, after Missouri read Iowa.

On Page 19, fourth line, for "same season" read summer season.

On Page 20, twenty-fifth line for "\$15,113,618,308" read \$15,013,618.09.

On Page 23, last line, for "1836" read 1856.

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## APPENDIX.

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### EXTRACTS FROM LIEUT. LEE'S REPORT, 1837.

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#### MISSISSIPPI RIVER.

The only serious obstacles to the navigation of the Mississippi from the mouth of the Ohio to the falls of the St. Anthony, a distance of about 1,200 miles, are the Des Moines and Rock river rapids.

#### DES MOINES RIVER (LOWER) RAPIDS.

These rapids situated about 200 miles above St. Louis, commence just below the Des Moines garrison, and terminate about three quarters of a mile above the village of Keokuk, and four miles above the mouth of the Des Moines river. Between these points the Mississippi flows with great velocity over an irregular bed of blue limestone, reaching from shore to shore, at all times covered with water, and through which many crooked channels have been worn by the action of the current. Its longitudinal slope not being uniform, but raised at several places above its general elevation, divides the whole distance into as many pools or sections. The passage over these reefs becomes, during low stages of the river, very difficult, in consequence of the shallowness of the water, its great fall and velocity, and the narrow winding channels through them; as the river rises, its surface becomes nearer and nearer paral-  
lelled to a plane tangent to the highest of the points, its extreme fall is diminished, and the only impediment consists in the rapidity of the current. The navigation being only impeded during the low stages of the river, which is limited generally from this cause to not more than three months in the year, and the obstructions being of a character to admit of removal. I shall refer only to the improvement of its natural bed, as being not only more practicable, but, in my opinion, preferable to any other.

The construction of an artificial channel along the Wisconsin (Iowa) shore, proposed by CAPTAIN SHREVE, in his report of 1836, has many advantages, but, from the information derived from the survey, it is found that it would require an excavation of more than three times the quantity of stone that would be necessary to make the natural channel double as wide, and of an equal depth. To make it the same width, viz: 200 feet wide and five feet deep, would require an excavation of more than a million cubic yards. This, with other considerations, has led me to prefer the improvement of one of the natural channels, and have selected that which, while it will require no more labor, promises when completed, to afford the easiest and safest route.

By improving the most difficult passes first, immediate benefit will be obtained. The meeting of boats will not be attended with the same danger as if they were confined to a continuous channel, as advantage may be taken of the pools before alluded to, where the navigation is comparatively good. The present length of the channel

being but little diminished, the descent will not be much increased; and though rendered more uniform, the velocity of the current not sensibly augmented. The increased area of the channel will be so small in comparison with the width of the river, that the supply of water will not be perceptibly lessened. Besides, by obstructing some of the minor channels with the stone excavated from that to be improved, its passage may be so far retarded as to leave no room for apprehension on this head.

The distance from the head to the foot of the rapids is 11-005 miles, and the entire fall of the river at the time of making the survey was 24-015 feet. The descent is not uniform, being greater over the reefs and less in the pools, is different in every section, and varies at every stage of the river. Having no certain marks to which I refer, the height of the river could only be compared with extreme low water, by the relative quantity of water on the shoalest parts, and which was ten or twelve inches more than is said can be found at its lowest stages. I have, therefore, assumed it to be one foot above low water level, and all the soundings are referred to this plane.

A line of levels was run on the Wisconsin side, and the meanders of each shore determined by a compass line. Commencing at the foot of the rapids, the first difficult pass is through the reef of rocks called the lower chain, through which two narrow channels, having a common outlet within a quarter of a mile of the Wisconsin [now Iowa] shore, wind obliquely across from within a hundred yards of the Illinois side.

The general direction of the eastern, or Illinois chute, is nearly straight. It is a quarter of a mile shorter than the western, or Filly Rock chute; is deeper and by cutting off the points on each side, and deepening the shoal places, a channel 200 feet wide, and five feet deep, will be obtained.

From the pool, at the head of the chain, the channel keeps along the Wisconsin, Iowa shore, and will only require the removal of some loose rocks to free it from obstructions to the head of the upper chain.

It will here be necessary to cut off the projecting points of the reef and deepen the channel, to afford a free communication with the section above, the navigation of which is interrupted as far as the Rock River (upper) rapids.

#### ROCK RIVER (UPPER) RAPIDS.

The upper, or Rock river rapids, distant about 150 miles from the Des Moines, commence fourteen miles above Rock island, and extend to its foot. Within this distance the Mississippi falls 25.740 feet, descending over a rocky bed, broken by reefs, which at some points reach entirely across the river, affording, at low water, a shallow channel, and projecting, at others, from opposite sides, interlock and form a winding, difficult and dangerous passage. The fall of the river is not regular, but like that at the lower rapids, is greater over the reefs, and less in the intermediate pools formed in like manner by them. The velocity of the current, varying with the descent, and continu-



ally checked by the rough bed of the river, the winding of the channel, and the projection of the reefs, though not as great as the fall would indicate, is still rapid, and, in many places difficult to stem.

The descending boats, swept along by the current, run the greatest risk, and the turns ought to be so regulated as to relieve them as far as possible. By cutting off the projecting points of some of the ledges, and excavating through others, this danger will be avoided, and a safe passage formed.

In the upper section called the Sycamore chain, it will be necessary to cut off a sharp angle, excavate through a ledge, and straighten the channel by cutting off the points.

From the foot of this chain to the head of Campbell's island, a distance of nearly two miles, the channel extends entirely across the river, and is free from all obstructions.

The second chain commences at the head of Campbell's island, just below which it will be necessary to excavate through the reef to the depth of about eighteen inches; to cut off the point of the reef, extending from the western shore towards the small island at the foot of Campbell's; excavate through the reef, making out from the eastern shore just above the mouth of Dutch creek, and cut off the point near that place. This will open a free passage to the head of Rock island, the commencement of the lower chain, from which a flat reef extends to the Wisconsin [Iowa] shore, and through which a channel 200 feet wide, 25 feet deep and 400 yards long, will have to be excavated. The only other part to be improved is in the bend below, where the channel passes between two reefs projecting from opposite sides of the river. By cutting off the point of that on the west, all obstructions will be removed to the foot of Rock island.

In making the improvements herein proposed, the department is so well aware of the importance of commencing with the lower, or Des Moines rapids, and the advantages of this course are so apparent that it can need no further recommendation. Their accomplishment will afford an uninterrupted channel through both rapids, sufficient, at all stages of the river for the class of boats that can ascend the Upper Mississippi.

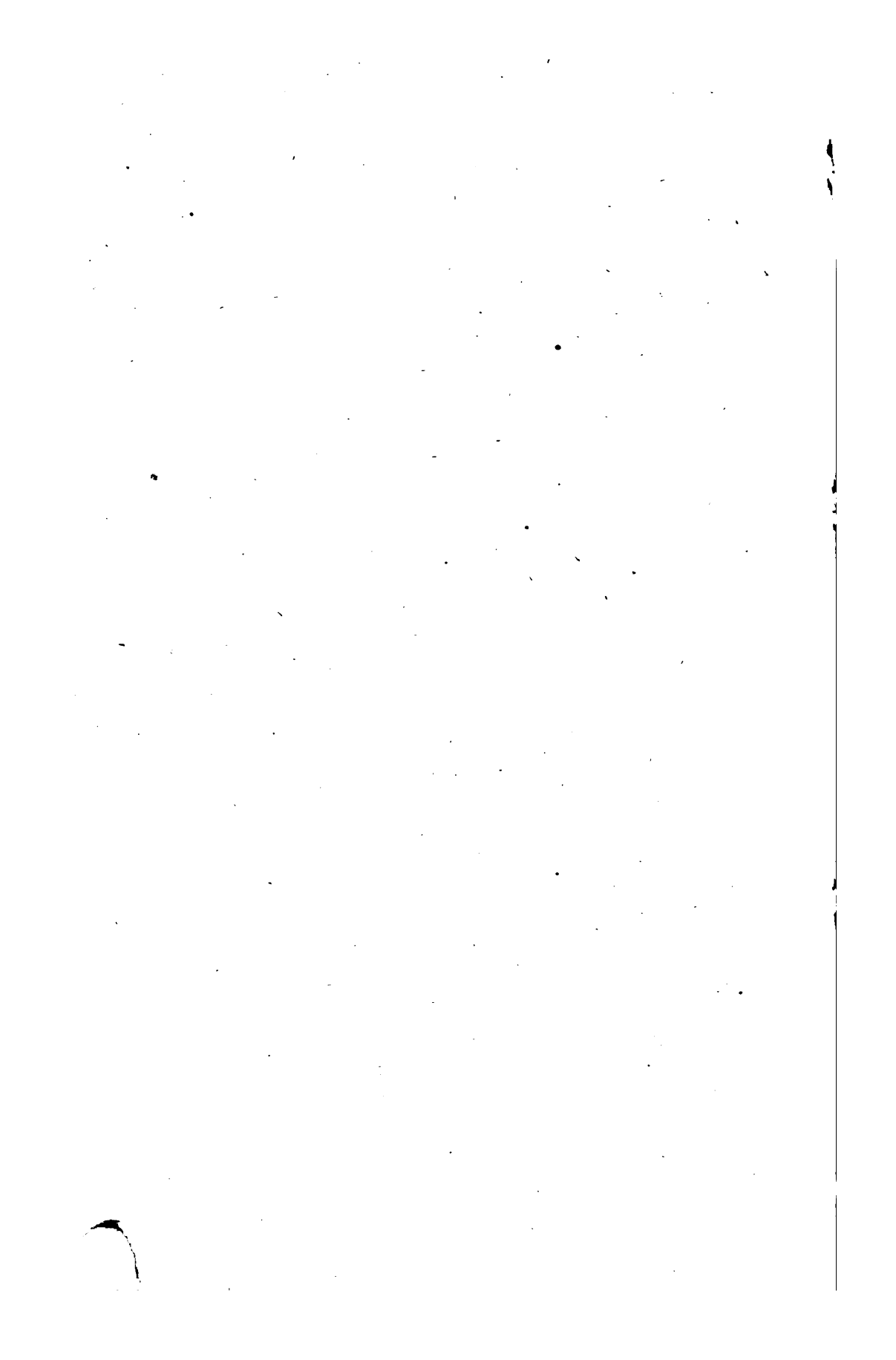
The removal of the obstructions in both rapids, at the several points named, will require an excavation of 172,000 cubic yards, through the solid rock. The difficulty attending such an operation, under water, which must be performed by blasting, is much increased by the rapid current of the Mississippi, the unexpected rises to which it is subject, and the short season for operations.

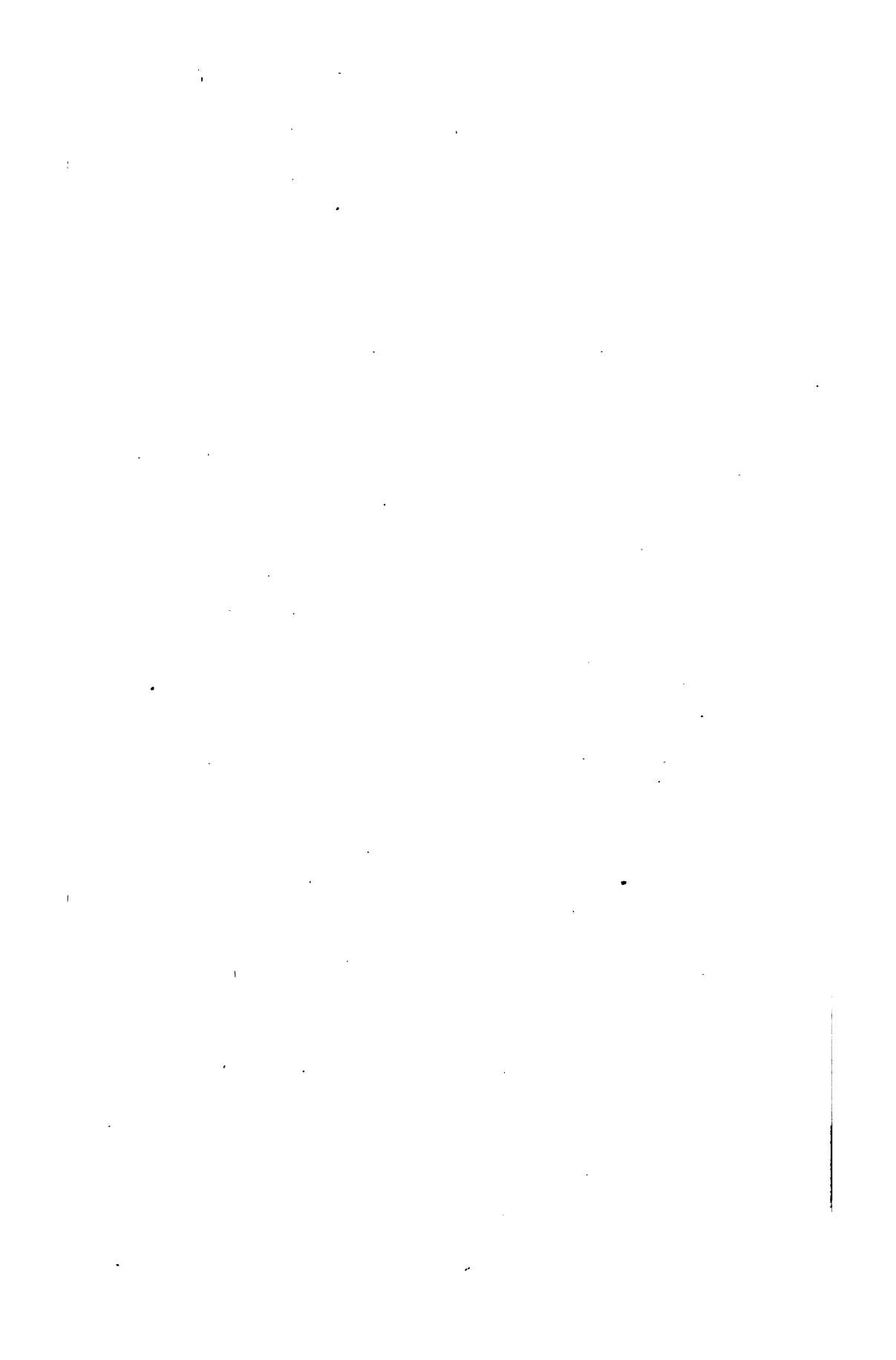
So much depends upon circumstances that can neither be foreseen nor controlled, that the estimate presented, of the probable cost of the work, must only be considered conjectural. Whatever may be the true amount, there can be no doubt but that the benefits that will result would more than authorize ten times that sum, and that the community at large will be repaid an hundred fold.













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